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# ILLUSTRATIONS OF TENNYSON

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# ILLUSTRATIONS OF TENNYSON

BY

JOHN CHURTON COLLINS

AUTHOR OF BOLINGBROKE: A HISTORICAL STUDY, ETC.

Nullum est jam dictum quod non dictum sit prius :  
Quare æquum est vos cognoscere atque ignoscere  
Quæ veteres factitarunt, si faciunt novi

TERENCE : Prol. in *Eunuch.*

What is borrowed is not to be enjoyed as our own, and it  
is the business of critical justice to give every bird of the Muses  
his proper feather—DR JOHNSON

And well his words become him ; is he not  
A full-cell'd honeycomb of eloquence  
Stor'd from all flowers ?

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## P R E F A C E

WHY so much importance should be attached to the comparative study of languages, and so little to the comparative study of literatures ; why, in the interpretation of the masterpieces of poets, it should be thought necessary to accumulate parallels and illustrations of peculiarities of syntax and grammar, and not be thought necessary to furnish parallels and illustrations of what is of far greater interest and importance, analogies namely in ideas, sentiments, modes of expression, and the like, whether arising from direct imitation, unconscious reminiscence, or similarity of temper and genius—the compiler of this little volume has never been able to understand. One thing is certain. The poetry of Lord Tennyson has become classical, and is therefore becoming, and will become more and more, a subject of serious study wherever the English language is spoken. An important branch of that study must undoubtedly be an enquiry into the nature and extent of his indebtedness to the writers who have preceded him —must be to compare with their originals the

imitations, the analogies, the adaptations, the simple transferences in which his poems notoriously abound. Nor is this all. No commentary on poetry is more useful, as assuredly no commentary is more interesting, than that afforded by poetry itself. How greatly does the *Aeneid* gain by comparison with the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey*, and the *Argonautica*, and how greatly do they, in their turn, gain by comparison with the *Aeneid*. The power and beauty of a particular simile in Virgil may impress us to the full without any reference to the corresponding simile in Homer or Apollonius, but to say that our pleasure is not increased by examining them side by side is absurd. It is therefore with this double object, with the object partly of tracing Lord Tennyson's direct imitations and transferences to their sources, and also with the object of simply illustrating his poems by the commentary of parallel passages in writers of his own and other languages, that I have compiled this little volume. I have also had another object in view. To the disgrace of our universities, the study of the *literæ humaniores* in the proper sense of the term has no place in their curricula, so that in the very centres of national culture, while the English and Italian classics have no recognition at all, the writings of the Greek and Latin classics are regarded so entirely as the monopoly of the philologist that they have almost ceased to have any significance as contributions to literature. The consequence has been that

in all our schools and colleges where the English classics are a subject of study, the study of them has been severed on principle from the study of the ancient classics and the classics of modern Italy. I thought, therefore, that anything which could contribute to illustrate the essential connection existing between the four leading and master literatures of the world, those namely of ancient Greece and Italy and of modern Italy and England, could not fail to be of service in showing how radically inadequate must be the critical study even of a poet so essentially modern as Lord Tennyson, without constant reference to those literatures which have been to him what they have been to his superiors and his peers in English poetry from the Renaissance to the present time.

It would be absurd and presumptuous to conclude that the analogies which have been traced between the ideas and expressions of Lord Tennyson and those of other poets and writers were in all, or indeed in most cases, deliberate or even conscious imitations. In his own noble words, we moderns are 'the heirs of all the ages.' We live amid wealth as prodigally piled up as the massive and myriad treasure-trove of Spenser's 'rich strand,' and it is now almost impossible for a poet to strike out a thought, or to coin a phrase, which shall be purely original. What constitutes Lord Tennyson's glory as a poet, it is no part of the present volume to discuss; it need hardly be said that had the extent of his indebtedness to his pre-

decessors been much greater than it is, it would no more have detracted from that glory than Milton's similar indebtedness to his predecessors detracts from his. It was observed of Virgil that he never fails to improve what he borrows, though Homer was his creditor; and what is true of Virgil is, as a rule, true of Tennyson—‘nihil tetigit quod non ornavit’—what he does still betters what is done.

I offer these illustrations simply as commentaries on works which will take their place beside the masterpieces of classical literature, and which will, like them, be studied with minute and curious diligence by successive generations of scholars. A versatility almost without parallel among poets has enabled Lord Tennyson to appeal to all classes. His poetry is the delight of the most fastidious and the most emotional. He touches Burns on one side, and he touches Sophocles on the other. But to the scholar, and to the scholar alone, will his best and most characteristic works become in their full significance intelligible. By him they will be cherished with peculiar fondness. To him they will be like the enchanted island in Shakespeare—

Full of echoes,  
Sounds and sweet airs, that give delight.

To him it will be a never-ending source of pleasure to study his Tennyson as he studies his Virgil, his Dante, and his Milton.

It has been thought proper to affix to the passages

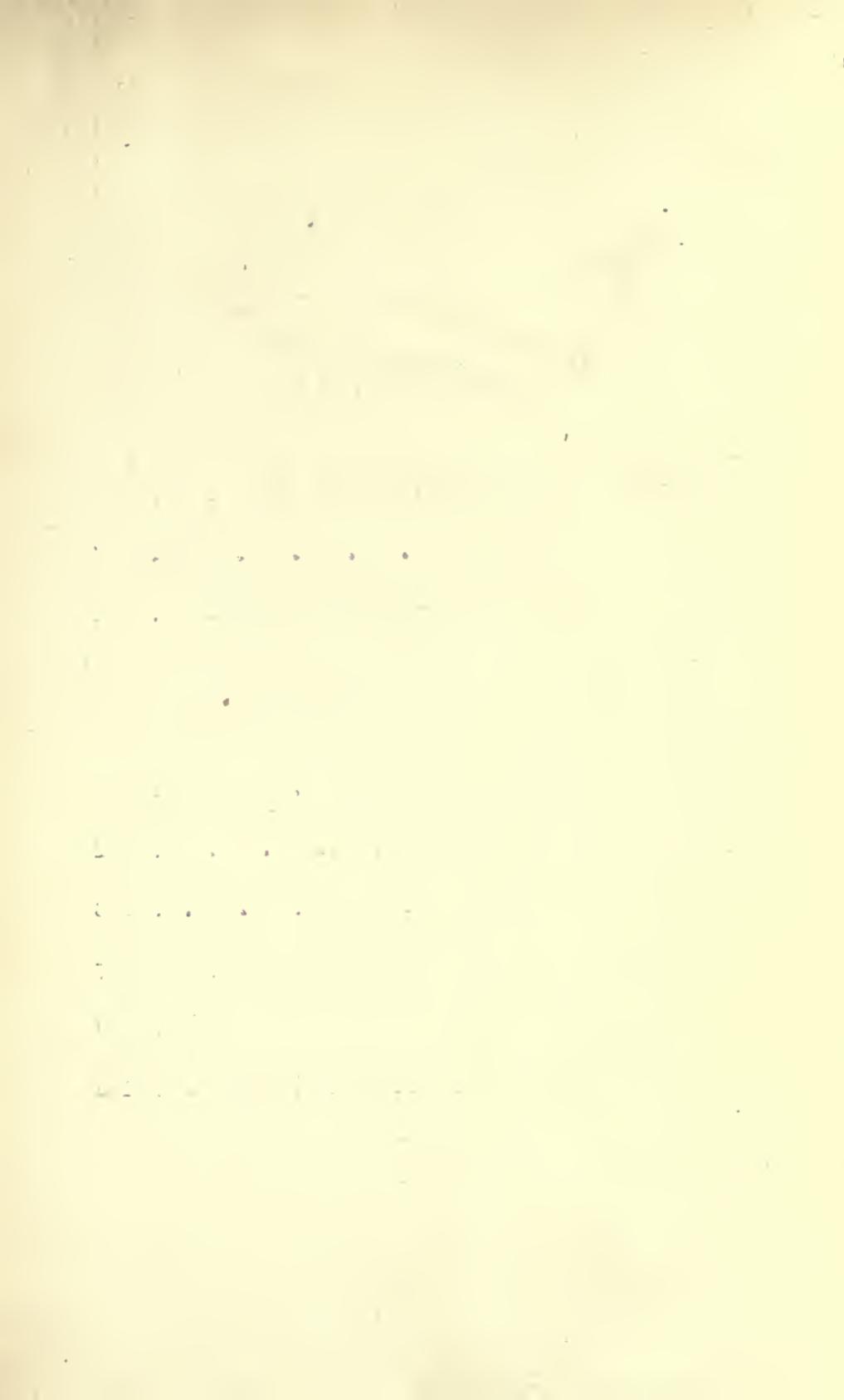
quoted from Greek, Latin, and Italian authors literal versions in English prose, though I need hardly say that the points of resemblance between the passages in Tennyson corresponding with the passages cited from authors in these languages are often necessarily lost in such versions, which can indeed preserve little more than analogies in thought, sentiment, and imagery. For this reason I have not given translations of the passages cited in the chapter which compares the style of Virgil and Tennyson.

It only remains for me to thank Messrs. Smith, Elder & Co. for allowing me to incorporate in the present volume the greater part of three articles contributed by me some years ago to the *Cornhill Magazine*.



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# ILLUSTRATIONS OF TENNYSON

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION—TENNYSON AND VIRGIL

THOSE who may happen to be acquainted with the *Saturnalia* of Macrobius will remember that among the most pleasing episodes in that interesting work are the two books in which Eustathius and Furius Albinus estimate the extent of Virgil's obligations to his predecessors. Eustathius having concluded a long and elaborate review of the passages in the Greek poets of which the great Roman had availed himself, Furius Albinus proceeds to trace him through Latin literature. He was half afraid, he said, to produce the formidable list of passages appropriated by the poet, because he might be exposing his favourite 'to the censure of the malignant and unlearned.' Remembering, however, that such parallels as he was about to point out have been common to poets of all ages, and complacently observing that what Virgil condescended to borrow became him much more than the original owner—to say nothing of that owner becoming in some cases immortalised by the theft—Furius plunges into his theme. Between them these Langbaines of the fifth century made Conington very uncomfortable towards

the end of the nineteenth. But if their disclosures have materially impaired Virgil's claims to originality, they have illustrated his faultless taste, his nice artistic sense, his delicate touch, his consummate literary skill. They initiated a new branch of study, they divulged a fruitful secret.

Without going so far as Harpax in *Albumazar*, when he says—

This poet is that poet's plagiary,  
And he a third's till they all end in Homer—

it is still interesting and necessary to remember that there have appeared in all literatures, at a certain point in their development, a class of poets who are essentially imitative and reflective. They have usually been men possessed of great natural ability, extensive culture, refined taste, wide and minute acquaintance with the literature which preceded them; they have occasionally been men endowed with some of the most precious attributes of original genius. The poets of Alexandria, the epic, lyric, and elegiac poets of Rome, are the most striking types of this class in ancient times. Tasso, Gray, and Tennyson are, perhaps, the most striking types in the modern world. In point of diction and expression, and regarded in relation to the mere material on which he works, Milton would also be included in this class of poets. But he is separated from them by the quality of his genius and his essential originality. (What he borrows is not simply modified or adapted but assimilated and transformed.) In the poets who have been referred to, with the occasional exception of Virgil, what is borrowed undergoes, as a rule, no such transformation.

They may be compared indeed to skilful horticulturists. They naturalise exotics. A flower which is the beauty of one region they transplant to another ; and they call art to the assistance of nature. If a blossom be single they double it ; if its hue be lovely it is rendered more lovely still. The work of such poets has a twofold value : it has—to borrow an expression from the schools—not only an exoteric but an esoteric interest. To sit down, for instance, to the study of the *Eclogues*, the *Georgics*, and the *Aeneid*, without being familiar with the illustrative masterpieces of Greek poetry and the fragments of the older Roman literature, would be like travelling through a country, rich with historical traditions and splendid with poetical associations, without possessing any sense of either. The uncritical spectator might be satisfied with the sensuous glory of the scenery, the simple loveliness of cloud and landscape, and the thousand effects of contrast and perspective ; but an enlightened man would feel something very like contempt for one who, with the Ilissus and the Mincio whispering at his feet, was sensible only of the natural beauties of the landscape round him. Nature has indeed made one world, Art another. Lord Tennyson has now, by general consent, taken his place among English classics ; he too will have, like Virgil and Horace, like Tasso and Gray, his critics and his commentators ; and, unless I am much mistaken, one of the most important and useful departments of their labour will be that of tracing his obligations to his predecessors, of illustrating his wondrous assimilative skill, his tact, his taste, his learning. John de Peyrarède once observed that he knew no task more instructive

than to compare Virgil's adaptations of Homer with the original passages—to note what details he rejected, what he added, what he softened down, what he thought proper to heighten. It was a perpetual study of the principles of good taste. (In full confidence that what applies to Virgil in this case applies with equal justice to the work of our Laureate, I propose in this little book to inaugurate, so to speak, a branch of Tennysonian research which must necessarily be gradual and cumulative, but which will sooner or later become indispensable to a proper appreciation of his services to art.) Every Englishman must be quite as jealous of the fame of the Laureate as our old friend Furius Albinus was of the fame of his beloved Virgil, and I have in truth as little fear as honest Furius of these my illustrations being mistaken for an insinuation of plagiarism against a poet of whom we are all of us so justly proud.

Tennyson, then, belongs to a class of poets whose work has a twofold value and interest—a value and interest, that is to say, dependent on its obvious, simple, and intrinsic beauties, which is its exoteric and popular side, and a value and interest dependent on niceties of adaptation, allusion, and expression, which is its esoteric and critical side. To a certain point only he is the poet of the multitude; pre-eminently is he the poet of the cultured. Nor, I repeat, will his services to art be ever understood and justly appreciated till his writings come to be studied in detail, till they are, as those of his masters have been, submitted to the ordeal of the minutest critical investigation; till the delicate mechanism of his diction shall be analysed as scholars analyse the

kindred subtleties of Sophocles and Virgil ; till the sources of his poems have been laid bare and the original and the copy placed side by side ; till we are in possession of comparative commentaries on his poems as exhaustive as those with which Orelli illustrated Horace, and Eichhoff Virgil. His poems must be studied not as we study those of the fathers of song—as we study those of Homer, Dante, Chaucer, Shakespeare—but as we study those who stand first in the second rank of poets. (In dealing with him we have not to deal with a Homer, but with an Apollonius, not with an Alcæus, but with a Horace—not, that is to say, with a poet of great original genius, but with an accomplished artist, with one whose mastery lies in assimilative skill, whose most successful works are not direct studies from simple nature, but studies from nature interpreted by art.) He belongs, in a word, to a school which stands in the same relation to the literature of England as the Alexandrian poets stood to the literature of Greece, and as the Augustan poets stood to the literature of Rome.

To illustrate what has been said. In the works of the fathers of poetry everything is drawn directly from Nature. Their characters are the characters of real life. The incidents they describe are, as a rule, such incidents as have their counterpart in human experience. When they paint inanimate objects, either simply in detail or comprehensively in groups, their pictures are transcripts of what they have with their own eyes beheld. In description for the mere sake of description they seldom indulge. The physical universe is with them merely the stage on which the tragi-comedy of life is evolving itself. Their language

is as a rule plain, simple, impassioned. When they are obscure the obscurity arises not from affectation but from necessity. Little solicitous about the niceties of conception and expression, they are almost free from what the Greeks called *κροκυλεγμός* (dealing in trifles) and *ψυχρότης* (ambitious conceits). Their object was to describe and interpret, not to refine and subtilise. They were great artists not because they worked consciously on critical principles but because they communed with truth. They were true to art because they were true to Nature.

In the school of which we may take Virgil and Tennyson to be the most conspicuous representatives, a school which seldom fails to make its appearance in every literature at a certain point of its development, all this is reversed. Their material is derived not from the world of Nature, but from the world of Art. The hint, the framework, the method of their most characteristic compositions, seldom or never emanate from themselves. Take their *dramatis personæ*. The only powerful portrait in Virgil is a study from Euripides and Apollonius; the rest are shadows, mere outlines, suggested sometimes by Homer and sometimes by the Greek dramatists. (Tennyson's Arthur, Guinevere, Elaine, and Launcelot are, regarded as characters, in no sense of the term creations. Derived from types which have long been commonplaces in fiction, they add nothing to the gallery of dramatic portraiture.) His Ulysses is a study from Dante. His most subtly elaborated character, Lucretius, is the result of a minute and patient study of the *De Rerum Naturâ*. The archetype for his most charming female creation, Edith, he found in Wordsworth.

(His minor heroes and heroines, his Eleänores, his Madelines, his Marianas, are rather embodiments of peculiar moods and fancies than human beings,) When Virgil sits down to write pastorals he reproduces Theocritus with servile fidelity. When he writes didactic poetry he takes Hesiod for his model. When he composes the *Æneid* he casts the first part in the mould of the *Odyssey* and the second part in the mould of the *Iliad*. He is careful also to introduce no episode for which he cannot point to his pattern. So with the Laureate. Tennyson's *Idylls* are a series of incidents from the Arthurian Romances. The plan of the work was suggested partly by Spenser and partly, perhaps, by Theocritus.<sup>1</sup> His *Enid* is from Lady Charlotte Guest's version of the *Mabinogion*. Of his classical studies *Œnone* was modelled on the Theocritean Idylls; *Ulysses* and *Tithonus* on the soliloquies in the Greek Plays. His *English Idylls* are obviously modelled on Theocritus, Southey, and Wordsworth. In Wordsworth's *Michael* he found a model for *Enoch Arden*, and in Miss Procter's *Homeward Bound* the greater part of the plot. His *Lady Clare* was derived from Miss S. E. Ferrier's novel, *The Inheritance*. His *In Memoriam* was suggested by Petrarch; his *Dream of Fair Women* by Chaucer; his *Godiva* by Moultrie;

<sup>1</sup> The great work of Spenser is, like the *Idylls*, an elaborate philosophical allegory, the central figure of which is King Arthur; and it was, like the *Idylls*, to have contained twelve parts. The minor resemblances between the two works are important and curious. What Theocritus may have suggested was the idea of substituting a series of idylls for a continuous narrative, of composing an epic on the same principle as painters present history or biography, through a succession of frescoes painted on separate panels. The three poems on Hercules seem to imply that he had intended to deal with the Herculean legends in this manner.

his *Columbus* by Mr. Ellis ; the women's university in *The Princess* by Johnson. His *Lotos-Eaters* is an interpretative sketch from the *Odyssey* ; his *Golden Supper* is from Boccaccio ; his *Dora* is the versification of a story by Miss Mitford. His *Voyage of Maeldune* is adapted from Joyce's *Celtic Romances*.

When Virgil has a scene to describe, or a simile to draw, he betakes him first to his predecessors to find a model, and then proceeds to fill in his sketch. With a touch here and a touch there, now from memory, now from observation, borrowing here an epithet and there a phrase—adding, subtracting, heightening, modifying, substituting one metaphor for another, developing what is latent in suggestive imagery, laying under contribution the wide domain of Greek and Roman literature—the unwearied artist patiently toils on, till his precious mosaic is without a flaw, till every gem in the coronet of his genius has received the last polish. It has been the pleasing task of a hundred generations of the learned to follow this consummate artist step by step, to discover his gems in their primitive state, and to compare them in that state with the state in which they are when they leave his finishing hand. Such an investigation is little less than an analysis of the principles of good taste, and from such an investigation the poet has infinitely more to gain than to lose. It is the object of this little book to show that much of Tennyson's most valuable work is of a similar character, that he possesses, like Virgil, some of the finest qualities of original genius, but that his style and method are, like the style and method of the Roman, essentially artificial and essentially reflective. With

both of them expression is the first consideration. If the matter be meagre, the form is always elaborate ; if the ideas are fine, the clothing is still finer. Their composition resembles the sculpture described by Ovid —*materiem superabat opus*—the workmanship is more precious than the material. There is, it is true, much in the *Georgics* the charm and power of which cannot be resolved into the impression made on us by rhythm and style, but the charm and power of two-thirds at least of the work depend mainly on expression. So with *Maud*, but without reservation ; it is a mere triumph of expression, a *tour de force* in elaborate rhythmic rhetoric. One of the most highly finished passages Virgil ever produced was the description of a boy whipping his top ; one of the finest descriptive passages in all Lord Tennyson's writings is the comparison between the heavy fall of a drunken man and the fall of a wave tumbling on the shore.)

The diction of both is often so subtly elaborated that it defies analysis. Dissect, for example, the line ' *discolor unde auri per ramos aura refusit*' (*Æn.* vi. 204), and you reduce it to nonsense. Dissect

There with her milk-white arms and shadowy hair  
She made her face a darkness from the king

(*Guinevere*),

and it becomes unintelligible. When Virgil wishes to describe a shepherd wondering whether after the lapse of a *few years* he will see his farm again, he writes—

<sup>1</sup> See the lines in *The Last Tournament*, beginning—

' Down from the causeway heavily to the swamp  
Fell, as the crest,' &c.

*Post aliquot, mea regna videns, mirabor aristas?*

When Tennyson has occasion to allude to the month of March, he speaks of

the roaring moon  
Of daffodil and crocus.

Their expressions not unfrequently resemble enigmas. A labyrinth becomes in Virgil

iter, quâ signa sequendi  
Falleret indeprensus et irremeabilis error;

and the life of Christ becomes in Tennyson's phraseology

the sinless years  
That breathed beneath the Syrian blue  
(*In Mem.* lli.),

and future ages (*id.* lxxvi.) 'the secular abyss to come.'

Would Virgil describe how 'an adulterer was lying in wait for the conqueror of Asia,' expression is tortured into

devictam Asiam subsedit adulter (*AEn.* xi. 268).

Would Tennyson describe the chancel of a country church he racks it into

where the kneeling hamlet drains  
The chalice of the grapes of God (*In Mem.* x.).

Both delight in substituting subtle suggestiveness for simplicity and directness of expression. If Virgil wishes to tell us that Dido is sleepless he says—

neque unquam  
Solvitur in somnos oculisve aut pectore noctem  
Accipit (*AEn.* iv. 529-30);

or if he describes a bull angrily butting with his horns it is—

irasci in cornua tentat (*AEn.* xii. 104).

If Tennyson would describe the flight of scared deer it is—

Twinkled the innumerable ear and tail (*The Brook*);

or a gesture of surprise, it is—

Up went the hush'd amaze of hand and eye (*Princess*).

So again perfectly commonplace things are presented in a euphuism which borders on the ludicrous. But here between Virgil and Tennyson resemblance ceases. Virgil has never gone further in this stilted euphuism than 'dona laboratæ Cereris' for loaves, or 'Eliadum palmas equarum' for mares who win the prize at Elis. His delicate good taste would have preserved him from such extravagances as

the knightly growth that fringed his lips

(*Passing of Arthur*)

for a moustache, or

azure pillars of the hearth (*Princess*)

for ascending smoke, or

ambrosial orbs (*Isabel*)

for apples.

In truth this peculiarity of Tennyson's diction is much more in the style of Lycophron and Nonnus, or in the style of the *Précieuses* of the Hôtel Rambouillet than on the model of Virgil. Equally un-Virgilian and Nonnic are the stilted periphrases affected in so many of Tennyson's blank verse poems, notably *The Princess* and the *Idylls*. Indeed, the

simple prose of Malory and Lady Charlotte Guest often undergoes in Tennyson's rendering precisely the same sort of transformation as the simple prose of St. John's Gospel undergoes in the hands of Nonnus. Nonnus finds in St. John's Gospel, iv. 26, *λέγει αὐτῇ ὁ Ἰησοῦς*, 'Jesus saith unto her.' This becomes in his paraphrase

Χριστὸς ἀμείζετο μάρτυρι μύθῳ  
δάκτυλον αὐτοβόητον ἀναυδεῖ ῥινὴ πελάσσει  
(Par. in Johannen, xxxviii. 26)

(Christ with witness word replied,  
The self-exclaiming finger placing against the speechless  
nose).

So again the simple statement 'when the evening was come' reappears as

καὶ σκιόεις ὅτε κῶνος ἀνέδραμε γείτονος ὥρφης  
(id. lxiii. 16)

(and when the shadowy cone of approaching night spread wide);

while in such phrases as *κιονέην αἴγλην* (*Dionysiacs*, v. 1), 'pillar'd splendour,' we have the exact counterpart of similar expressions in Tennyson—'pillar'd dusk of sounding sycamores,' for example. Instances of these peculiarities in the style of Nonnus and Tennyson (they are characteristic of all literatures in their decadence, and have been severely commented on by Longinus) might be extended indefinitely.

Again, both Virgil and Tennyson exhaust the resources of rhetoric to add distinction to their diction. Sometimes we have the effect put for the cause. Thus in Virgil the sword in Dido's breast with the blood seething round it becomes

*Infixum stridit sub pectore vulnus* (*AEn.* iv. 689),

and in Tennyson it is said of the sword, as it flashed to the fatal stroke for Iphigenia—

*The bright death quiver'd at the victim's throat*  
(*Dream of Fair Women*).

Both poets delight, like Sophocles, in expressions which are apparently simple, but which, if interpreted simply, would convey far other meanings than those they are intended to convey. Thus in Virgil, *Aeneid*, x. 161, the words—

Jam quærit sidera, opacæ  
Noctis iter—

signify not what they seem to signify, but ‘stars, the road-marks of the shadowy night’—stars which are directing the course of Æneas’s ship during the night. Or, again, the apparently simple expression in *AEn.* vii. 598—

Nam mihi parta quies, *omnisque in limine portus*—  
pregnant with suggestive ambiguities, has been the despair of commentators from Servius to Conington. So in Tennyson a prayer that the poet may have the wisdom to understand that God is wise becomes

In thy wisdom make me wise  
(*In Memoriam*, Introduction).

My confident belief in him, in what he would have done, becomes

His credit (*In Mem. lxxx. st. 4*),

and the perplexities and grief of a youth desolated by sorrow

Confusions of a wasted youth (*id. Introduction*).

Both delight in subtle suggestiveness. Compare, for example, the line in Dido’s address to Æneas—

*I, sequere Italiam ventis, pete regna per undas*  
(*AEn. iv. 381*);

or still better her dream—

Semperque relinqui  
*Sola sibi, semper longam incomitata videtur*  
*Ire viam, et Tyrios desertâ querere terrâ*  
*(Æn. iv. 466 sqq.).*

How piercing the pathos ! yet how easily might its full force be missed. Now compare Tennyson's

Near us Edith's holy shadow, *smiling at the slighter ghost*  
*(Locksley Hall Sixty Years After).*

Again :—

a flying splendour . . .  
 Now fired an *angry Pallas* on the helm,  
 Now set a *wrathful Dian's moon on flame*  
*(Princess, vi.).*

It would be useless to multiply instances of this, for it is of the very essence of their art.

It is the same with their epithets, which are pregnant with recondite significance. Take, for example, these two from Virgil (he is speaking of the various trees and shrubs which spring up spontaneously) :—

Sponte sua veniunt camposque et flumina late  
*Curva* tenent (*Georg. ii. 11, 12*)—

where the epithet 'curva' calls up with singular distinctness the trees growing on the banks and marking the windings of the stream. A still better example may be found in *Æneid*, ix. 494–5, where the mother of the slain Euryalus is bursting out into frenzied lamentations over his corpse :—

In me omnia tela  
 Conjicite, O Rutuli, me *primam* absumite ferro ;  
 the wonderful force of which epithet is, no doubt,

rightly explained by Servius<sup>1</sup>—if she is really to lose her son, for as yet she cannot understand that she has lost him, all on earth will—so thinks she—perish too, and therefore she prays that they will destroy her *first*.

Or take, again, the word ‘*inimicam*,’ *AEn.* x. 295—

Inimicam findite terram—

where it means not only generally the ‘foeman’s land,’ and the land which hates you, but particularly the land which is in your way—in the way of the ship you are to send ploughing into it.

So with Tennyson. Take such an epithet as ‘*doubtful*,’ in *In Mem.* lxi.—

Yet turn thee to the *doubtful* shore,  
Where thy first form was made a man.

Unfold it, and we find it involving three distinct meanings. First, physically picturesque, it presents the earth as seen by glimpses through intervening clouds from an immense height, recalling Shakespeare’s ‘varying shore o’ the world;’ secondly, in a metaphysical sense, the earth which fills us with doubt and perplexity; and thirdly the earth which is itself a riddle and enigma.) So too the epithet ‘*vocal*,’ in *In Mem.* lxiv.—

While yet beside its *vocal* springs  
He play’d at counsellors and kings.

Both delight in employing epithets which correspond not to what is expressed in the substantives to which

<sup>1</sup> ‘Unusquisque in propriæ salutis desperatione credit tum universa etiam posse consumi, unde est quod modo dixit “me primam,” quasi, mortuo Euryalo, omnes Trojani perituri essent.’—Servius, *ad locum*,

they are attached, but to some image or idea implied or suggested in association. Thus Virgil's ' *sceleratas sumere pœnas*' (*Æn.* ii. 576), which is of course for ' *pœnas ex sceleratâ sumere*.' So too (*Æn.* x. 300) ' *spumantes rates*,' 'through the surf,' or 'mid showers of spray,' and ' *cæcis erramus in undis*' (*Æn.* iii. 200), and (*Æn.* vi. 543) ' *ad impia Tartara mittit*,' and again (*Æn.* vii. 141)—

Pater omnipotens ter cælo *clarus* ab alto  
Intonuit;

and

*Bina* die siccant ovis ubera (*Ecl.* ii. 42).

It is, in fact, an habitual trick of Virgil's style. Nor is it less affected in Tennyson's. ' *Melissa shook her doubtful curls*' (*Princess*, iii.) ; ' *the sandy foot-print* (*id.* iii.) ; ' *the red fool-fury of the Seine*' (*In Mem.* cxxvii.) ; ' *the bright death quiver'd at the victim's throat*' (*Dream of Fair Women*) ; ' *the windy gleams of March*' (*Merlin and Vivian*) ; ' *the pillar'd dusk of sounding sycamores*' (*Audley Court*) ; ' *a hoary face Meet for the reverence of the hearth*' (*Aylmer's Field*). But it is useless to multiply instances.

Both are fond of employing epithets which mark and describe some local or temporary peculiarity in natural objects. Thus in *Æneid*, v. 308-9, Virgil speaks of the olive as ' *flava*' :—

Tres præmia primi  
Accipient, *flavâque* caput nectentur olivâ—

and the epithet has so much puzzled the commentators, from Servius (who paraphrases it as ' *viridi*' ) downward, that they have resorted to various conjectures. But none of them have noticed that the games, for one

of which this olive was to be the prize, took place at the time of year when the olive was in flower; 'and the epithet, taken literally, is strictly correct and proper, and signalises a very remarkable and distinctive characteristic of the olive—its yellow pollen, which it sheds so copiously in the flowering season as not only to cover the leaves, trunk, and branches of the tree, but even the ground and neighbouring objects with a yellow dust' (Henry's *Aeneidea, ad locum*, verse 309). So with Tennyson. In *The Marriage of Geraint* occur the lines—

Men saw the goodly hills of Somerset,  
And white sails flying on the *yellow* sea.

(Mr. Swinburne, in an interesting passage in his *Essay on Tennyson and Musset*, tells us how greatly this description had perplexed him, as he had never seen such a phenomenon. But he adds, 'On the first bright day I ever spent on the eastern coast of England I saw the truth of this touch, and recognised once more with admiring delight the subtle and sure fidelity of that happy and studious hand. There on the dull yellow, foamless floor of dense discoloured sea, so thick with clotted sand that the water looked massive and solid as the shore, the white sails flashed whiter against it and along it as they fled, and I knew once more the truth of what I had never doubted—that the eye and the hand of Tennyson may always be trusted at once and alike to see and to express the truth.) In *Pelleas and Ettarre* we have another example of this recondite study of natural phenomena :—

It seem'd to Pelleas that the fern without  
Burnt as a living fire of emeralds—

an effect which is simply unintelligible, unless we

remember that Pelleas is lying on his back at sunset, with his eye running on a level with the surface of the bracken. But to pass to other points which these subtle and elaborate artists have in common: Both abound in the figures known to grammarians as hypallage, enallage, paronomasia, onomatopœia, oxy-moron, hyperbaton. Both sedulously cultivate alliteration and assonance. Both are fond of employing common words in uncommon senses. Virgil's use of 'mollis' (*Georg.* ii. 389; *Aeneid*, ix. 817, &c.) in the sense of restless or shifting; of 'vexasse' (*Ecl.* vi. 75), the force of which depends on its derivation; of 'addita' for 'infesta' (*AEn.* vi. 90); of 'bipennis' (*id.* xi. 135), not of an axe, but in its original adjectival sense; of 'orare' for 'loqui' (*id.* vii. 446); of 'caducus' for 'fallen' (*id.* vi. 481), are analogous to such expressions in Tennyson as 'glorious' in *In Mem.* cxxviii.—

To fool the crowd with *glorious* lies;  
*brute* in *id. cxxvii.*—

The *brute* earth lightens to the sky;  
as 'secret' in *Lotos-Eaters*—

Where they smile *in secret*, looking over wasted lands;  
as 'pathos' in *Love and Duty*—

Shall sharpest *pathos* blight us;  
as 'forgetful' (*In Memoriam*, xxv.) and 'painful' (*Palace of Art*) in the sense respectively of 'causing forgetfulness' and 'full of pain.'

Both largely affect archaisms and the revival or adoption of obsolete or provincial words. Thus Tennyson's 'bight' (*Voyage of Maeldune*), 'garth' (*Enoch Arden*), 'poach'd filth' (*Merlin*), 'rok'y hollow'

(*Last Tourn.*), 'dune' (*id.*), 'agaric' (*Gareth and Lynette*), 'mawkin' (*Princess*), 'bosks' (*id.*), 'byre' (*The Victim*), and the like, answer to Virgil's 'umbracula' (*Ecl. ix. 42*), 'uri,' a Gallic word (*Georg. ii. 374*), 'camuris sub cornibus' (*Georg. iii. 55*), 'cujum' (*Ecl. iii. 1*). As Virgil employs extensively idioms and phrases from the Greek, so Tennyson employs as extensively idioms and phrases from both the Greek and the Latin. Virgil's 'sensit medios delapsus in hostes' (*Æn. ii. 377*), 'dederatque comam diffundere ventis' (*id. i. 319*), 'ventis maria omnia recti' (*id. 524*), 'addiderat socium, non inferiora secutus' (*id. vi. 170*), 'et nunc nequidquam fallis dea' (*Æn. xii. 634*), and the like answer to Tennyson's 'strike a sudden hand in mine' (*In Mem. xiv.*); 'roar from yonder dropping day' (*id. xv.*), 'learns her gone and far from home' (*id. viii.*); 'and come whatever loves to weep' (*In Mem. xviii.*); 'I see thee what thou art' (*Morte d'Arthur*);

So may whatever tempest mars  
Mid-ocean, spare thee (*In Mem. xvii.*);

just as phrases like 'finish'd to the finger nail' (*Edwin Morris*), 'stood foursquare' (*Ode on Wellington*), 'Sneeze out a full God-bless-you right and left' (*Edwin Morris*), 'ccok'd his spleen' (*Princess*, i.), 'laugh'd with alien lips' (*id. iv.*), are analogous to Virgil's frequent attempts to transplant phrases from the Greek poets into Latin, such as the famous mistranslation from Theocritus (if mistranslation it was) in *Eclogue* viii. 58, 'omnia vel medium fiant mare,' his similarly ambiguous 'cratera coronant' (*Georg. ii. 528*), his 'ut vidi, ut perii' (*Ecl. viii. 41*); his 'clamore incendunt cœlum' (*Æn. x. 894*), and his

frequent Homeric analogues. How Virgil attempted to enrich his language by giving Latin conjunctions the peculiar force and function of Greek, by employing every device of verbal collocation to supply the want of particles, by habitually making the Latin passive serve the place of the Greek middle, and the Latin perfect the place of the Greek aorist, is notorious.<sup>1</sup> Tennyson has done exactly the same for English. Thus he makes our word 'for' correspond to the Greek epexegetic γάρ, as at the beginning of *The Coming of Arthur*—'For many a petty king,' &c., where the 'for' simply opens the narrative; thus in *In Memoriam*, xc., 'but' perhaps answers to the Greek ἀλλά and the Latin *at* :—

Ah, dear, *but* come thou back to me.

It would be needless to multiply instances. In *In Memoriam*, lii., we have an imitation of the prophetic present :—

Abide : thy wealth *is* gather'd in,  
When Time hath sunder'd shell from pearl;

in *id.* xxvi. an imitation of the Greek optative :—

Then *might* I find, ere yet the morn  
Breaks hither, &c.

In *Pelleas and Ettarre* there is plainly an attempt to imitate the Greek aorist in the frequentative sense :—

<sup>1</sup> Milton is fond of the same thing: thus in *Par. Lost*, i. 318, we have the English 'or' answering exactly to the Greek οὐ or οὐδεῖ :—

‘or have ye chosen this place  
After the toil of battle,’ &c.—

and in *id.* bk. ii. 'what' is used for the Latin 'quid' :—

‘What sit we, then, projecting peace or war ? ’

His eyes,  
 Harder and drier than a fountain bed  
 In summer ; thither *came* the village girls  
 And *linger'd* talking, and they come no more, &c.

From Virgil Tennyson has learned the magical effect which may be produced by a single word placed for the sake of emphasis out of its proper order in the sentence. There is, perhaps, nothing in the whole of poetry more pathetic than the single word 'Anchisiades' and its collocation, in the passage (*Æn.* x. 821) describing the effect of the death of Lausus on Æneas, when, remembering his own father, he remembers that young Lausus was dying on behalf of his :—

At vero ut vultum vidit morientis et ora,  
 Ora modis, *Anchisiades*, pallentia miris.

Compare, in *Locksley Hall Sixty Years After*, Tennyson's similar employment of the name Edith :—

Strong in will and rich in wisdom, *Edith*, yet so lowly-sweet,  
 Woman to her inmost heart, &c.

So, too (same poem) :—

Here we met, our latest meeting—*Amy*—sixty years ago—  
 She and I.

In a word, the diction of Tennyson is, in its essential characteristics, as nearly the exact counterpart to that of Virgil as it is possible for verbal expression in one language to be the counterpart of that in another.

Nor are these the only points of resemblance between them. Both are elaborate artists in onomatopœic effect. Virgil's 'Quadrupedante putrem sonitu quatit ungula campum' (*Æn.* viii. 596), his 'Quas animosi Euri assidue franguntque feruntque' (*Georg.*

ii. 441), his 'Illi inter sese magnâ vi brachia tollunt In numerum' (*Æn.* viii. 453), his 'Insequitur cumulo præruptus aquæ mons' (*id.* i. 105), his 'Sternitur exanimisque tremens procumbit humi bos' (*id.* v. 481), his 'Radit iter liquidum celeres neque commovet alas' (*id.* 217), his magical lines in *Georgic.* i. 356-9, &c. &c., may be compared with Tennyson's

I heard the water lapping on the crag,  
And the long ripple washing in the reeds  
(*Morte d'Arthur*);

Shock'd like an iron clanging anvil bang'd  
With hammers (*Princess*, v.);

On the bald street breaks the blank day (*In Mem.* vii.);

The sweep of scythe in morning dew (*id.* lxxxix.);

Dry clash'd his harness in the icy caves  
And barren chasms, and all to left and right  
The bare black cliff clang'd round him, as he based  
His feet on juts of slippery crag that rang  
Sharp smitten (*Morte d'Arthur*).

There are, of course, similar effects in most poets, and notably in the Homeric poems, but in Virgil and Tennyson they are not only more artificially elaborated, but more directly and assiduously sought. The only other poet who has elaborated them as carefully and employed them to the same extent is Milton, the greatest master, perhaps, of onomatopœic effect in our language. On similarities of temper and genius between the two poets, on their essential seriousness and earnestness, on their strong religious instinct, on their profound sense of the sadness and mystery of human life, on their sensitive sympathy with distress and pain in whatever pitiful form they may assume among breathing things, on their de-

light in Nature, on their intense patriotism, on their reverence for tradition and prescription, on their contempt for the multitude, on the union in both of the antiquarian and scholar with the poet and philosopher, this is not the place to comment. It is the purpose of this little book to illustrate another interesting point of resemblance between these poets, the use, namely, which they have made of the work of their predecessors—to show that, as Virgil has, on a very large scale, drawn on the literary wealth of Greece and of his native land, so Tennyson has, on a corresponding scale, drawn not on that wealth merely, but on the wealth which has been accumulating since.

The principle of arrangement which it will be most convenient to follow in this commentary will be to take the poems in the order in which they are grouped in the table of contents to the complete edition of the poet's works published by Macmillan in 1889. Group I. includes the group entitled *Juvenilia*; Group II. *The Lady of Shalott, and other Poems*; Group III. *English Idylls, and other Poems*; Group IV. *Enoch Arden, and other Poems*; Group V. *The Princess* and the miscellaneous poems following; Group VI. *In Memoriam*; Group VII. *Maud*; Group VIII. *Idylls of the King*; Group IX. *The Lover's Tale, Ballads, and other Poems*; in Group X. may conveniently be placed all the later miscellaneous poems, together with *Demeter* and the poems included with it.

## CHAPTER II

## GROUP I.—JUVENILIA

*To the Queen.*—The fine thought that the throne is  
Broad-based upon her people's will  
appears to have been suggested by Shelley:—

Athens diviner yet  
Gleam'd with its crest of columns, *on the will*  
*Of man* as on a mount of diamond set  
(*Ode to Liberty*).

Where *Claribel* low lieth :

The care with which Tennyson has in these and in his later poems collected the musical names of women found in the works of preceding poets is in itself a proof of his discriminating industry. To pass over obvious instances, Claribel is of course either from Spenser (*F. Q.*, book ii. canto iv.) or from *The Tempest* (act ii. sc. 1); Mariana from *Measure for Measure*; Madeline from Keats's *Eve of St. Agnes*. Oriana, derived originally from the *Amadis de Gaul*, is a favourite name with Fletcher, appearing in *The Knight of Malta*, in *The Wild Goose Chase*, in *The Woman Hater*; Rosalind, a name coined, so Kirke seems to imply, by Spenser (see his note on *The Shepherd's Calendar*, ecl. i.) and adopted by Lodge and Shake-

speare ; Adeline, from Byron's *Don Juan* (canto xiii. *sqq.*) ; Fatima is from the *Arabian Nights* ; Melissa (*Princess*), a name direct from the Greek, the common name of priestesses, and particularly of the priestesses of Demeter ; Camilla (*Lover's Tale*), from Virgil (*Aen.* vii. 803), but long naturalised in English by the Elizabethan novelists and dramatists.

In the poem *Nothing will Die*—

Nothing will die,  
All things will change—

we have simply the versification of a commonplace which has been very eloquently expressed by many poets, particularly by Euripides (Fragments of *Chrysippus*), by Empedocles (Frag. lib. i. 35-108), by Lucretius (ii. 990 *sqq.*), by Pope (*Essay on Man*, epist. ii. 13 *sqq.*), and by Shelley (*Adonais*, st. 42, 43). The line—

It will change, but it will not fade—

is of course an echo of Shelley's

I change, but I cannot die (*The Cloud*).

In *All Things will Die* we have in the line—

Every heart this May morning in joyance is beating—

and in the tone of the whole passage, a reminiscence of Wordsworth's *Ode on the Intimations of Immortality*, stanza 4, while the ghastly picture of death in the lines—

Death is calling ;  
While I speak to ye  
The jaw is falling,  
The red cheek paling,  
The strong limbs failing,  
Ice with the warm blood mixing,  
The eyeballs fixing—

calls to mind the same ghastly picture in the Departed Soul's Address to the Body in the *Exeter Book*. It is a purely Saxon note; we have it again in *The Vision of Sin*.

In *Lilian* the singular epithet

When from *crimson-threaded* lips

may be compared with Cleveland's

*Her lips those threads of scarlet dye*

Wherein love's charms and quiver lie

(Sing-song on Clarinda's Wedding).

In *Isabel* the lines—

Eyes . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .

..... tended by

## Pure vestal thoughts in the translucent fane

Of her still spirit—

may be compared with Shelley's

And through thine eyes e'en in thy soul I see

A lamp of vestal fire burning internally

(Dedication to 'Revolt of Islam').

The laws of marriage *character'd* in gold

Upon the blanchèd tablets of her heart:

The originator of this expression appears to have been Æschylus (*Prom.* 791) :—

ἢν ἐγγράφου σὺ μνήμοσιν δέλτοις φρενῶν

(And this do thou inscribe in the unforgetting tablets of the mind).

So it passed to the English poets; see Heywood's

### Within the *rcd-leaved table of my heart*

(*Woman Killed with Kindness*),

and Shakespeare's

*Thy gift, thy tables are within my brain*

Full character'd with lasting memory

(Sonnet cxxii.).

With respect to *Mariana*, the poet has himself intimated by the motto quotation that the suggestion of the poem was a debt to Shakespeare; but probably the four exquisite lines in which Sappho appears to be describing some *Mariana* of antiquity were not without their influence on him:—

δέδυκε μὲν ἀ σελάννα  
καὶ Πληγάδες, μέσαι δὲ  
νύκτες, παρὰ δ' ἔρχετ' ὥρα,  
ἔγω δὲ μόνα κατεύδω

(The moon has set, and the Pleiades, and it is midnight; the hour too is going by, but I sleep alone).

The two beautiful lines—

Her tears fell with the dews at even,  
Her tears fell ere the dews were dried—

were apparently adapted from two lines, scarcely less beautiful, which indicate the loss poetry has sustained in the destruction of the works of Helvius Cinna:—

Te matutinus flentem conspexit Eous,  
Te flentem paullo vedit post Hesperus idem  
(CINNAE Reliq. ed. Mueller, p. 88)

(Thee in tears the star of morn beheld, thee in tears the same star, anon at even, saw).

The verse in Horace, *Odes*, II. ix. 10-12, affords a more obvious parallel, but it has not the same flavour:—

Nec tibi vespero  
Surgente deceidunt amores,  
Nec rapidum fugiente solem

(And thy love leaves thee not when vesper rises, nor when it flies the striding sun—or torrid sun).

Till cold winds woke the *gray-eyed morn*:

From Shakespeare—

The *grey-eyed morn* smiles on the frowning night  
(*Romeo and Juliet*, act ii. sc. 3).

In the poem *To —* we have one or two reminiscences worth noting:—

Ray-fringed *eye-lids of the morn*:

Cf. *Lycidas* :—

Under the opening *eye-lids of the morn*.

Again :—

Nor *trenchant swords*:

Cf. Shakespeare, *Timon of Athens*, iv. 3 :—

Make soft thy *trenchant sword*.

Like that strange angel, &c.:

The allusion is of course to Genesis xxxii. 24–32.

In the *Recollections of the Arabian Nights* we have, so far as the tone and style are concerned, little more than an echo of Coleridge's *Kubla Khan* and *Lewti*, with expressions carefully culled from other poets dove-tailed as it were in the fine mosaic of the diction. Thus the beautiful phrase, repeated as the burden of the poem—

It was in the *golden prime*  
Of good Haroun Alraschid—

is Shakespeare's

That cropp'd the *golden prime* of this sweet prince  
(*Rich. III.* act i. sc. 2, 248).

Full of the city's *stilly sounds*:

So Shakespeare :—

The hum of either army *stilly sounds*  
(*Henry V.* prol. act iv.).

The matter of the poem and the imagery are of course simply transferred from the gorgeous description of Harun al Rashid's Garden of Gladness in

the story of Nur-al-din Ali and the damsel Anis al Talis, 'Thirty-Sixth Night.'

In the *Ode to Memory* we have many illustrations of the care with which the poet has noted and appropriated the felicitous epithets of his predecessors.

The *dew-impearlèd* winds of dawn :

This beautiful epithet is transferred from Drayton, who applies it with more propriety to flowers :—

Amongst the dainty *dew-impearlèd* flowers  
(*Ideas*, Sonnet liii.).

The 'black earth : ' this is a favourite epithet with the Greek poets ; with Homer a stock one. Cf. *Il.* ii. 699 and *passim*, Sappho (*Ode to Aphrodite*, 10), Fragments of Aleman (Frag. 60), Pseudo-Anacreon (21 [19]). The 'ribbèd sand' is Wordsworth's 'as is the ribb'd sea-sand,' stanzas inserted in *The Ancient Mariner* (part iv.). The 'wattled folds' is Milton's 'the folded flocks penned in their wattled cotes' (*Comus*, 344). So too the epithet 'amber' as applied to morning has been similarly applied by Milton (*L'Allegro*, 61), where he speaks of it as 'robed in flames and amber light.' So in 'storied walls' we have a felicitous expression originating, perhaps, from Milton's 'storied windows' (*Il Penseroso*, 159), and employed by Pope, 'the trophied arches, storied halls' (*Essay on Man*, iv. 303), and by Gray, 'storied urn' (*Elegy*, 41). The magnificent epithet 'myriad-minded,' which occurs also in this poem, has a curious history. It was discovered by Coleridge as a phrase *μυριόνος* in some Byzantine writer, who applied it to one of the Patriarchs of Byzantium, with sufficient impropriety, no doubt. However Coleridge, in his own

phrase, rescued it and applied it to the one man to whom it was magnificently appropriate—Shakespeare.<sup>1</sup> *A Character* seems to owe something to Wordsworth, and something to Shakespeare. In Wordsworth's

One to whose smooth-rubbed soul can cling  
Nor form nor feeling, great nor small,  
A reasoning, self-sufficient thing,  
An intellectual all in all,

if we have not the germ of the poem we have an excellent commentary, while Shakespeare's fop, Hotspur's speech (*Henry IV.* Part I. act i. sc. 3), seems to have suggested a touch or two. The epithet 'secretest' in *The Poet* is Shakespeare's 'secretest man of blood' (*Macbeth*, act iii. sc. 4). So too 'the golden stars.' So in the same poem 'the breathing spring' is Pope's

All the incense of the breathing spring (*Messiah*, 24).

So in *The Sea Fairies* 'the ridgèd sea' is from *Lear* (act iv. sc. 6), 'horns welk'd and waved like the ridgèd sea.'

The *Dirge*, if it does not recall verbally, derives obviously its sentiment, colour, and tone from the dirge and the lines introductory to the dirge in *Cymbeline*.

Long purples of the dale:

Cf. *Hamlet*, iv. 7:—

Daisies, and long purples.

<sup>1</sup> 'ἀνὴρ μυριόνος, a phrase which I have borrowed from a Greek monk, who applies it to a Patriarch of Constantinople. I might have said that I have reclaimed rather than borrowed it: for it seems to belong to Shakespeare *de juri singulari et ex privilegio naturæ* (Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, chap. ix. note).

The gold-eyed kingcups fine :

Cf. *Cymbeline*, ii. 3 :—

And winking *mary-buds* begin  
To ope their *golden* eyes.

In *Love and Death* the fine expression—

What time the mighty moon was *gathering light*—

is from Virgil (*Georg.* i. 427) :—

Luna revertentes cum primum *colligit ignes*

(What time the moon is first gathering her rallying fires).

The use of ‘vans’ for ‘wings’—

Spread his sheeny *vans* for flight—

follows Milton :—

His sail-broad *vans*

He spreads for flight (*Par. Lost*, ii. 927-8),

who in his turn adapted it from Tasso (*Ger. Lib.* ix. 60) :—

Indi spiega al gran volo i *vanni* aurati

(Afterwards he spreads for a great flight his gilded wings).

In the fragments of Ibucus we have an interesting parallel to the opening stanzas of *Eleänore* ; compare the *spirit* and images of Tennyson’s verses with the following lines :—

Εὐρύαλε, γλαυκέων Χαρίτων θάλος,  
καλλικόμων μελέδημα, σὲ μὲν Κύπρις  
ἄ τ’ ἀγανοβλέφαρος Πειθώ ροδέοισιν  
ἐν ἄνθεσιν θρέψαν.

μύρτα τε, καὶ ἵα καὶ ἐλίχρυσος  
μᾶλι τε καὶ ρόδα καὶ τέρεινα δάφνα,  
τᾶμος ἄϋπνος κλυτὸς ὅρθρος ἐγείρησιν ἀηδόνας

(Fragments of IBYCUS)

(Euryalus, nurseling of the sweet Graces, care of the fair-haired ones, thee Cypris and mild-eyed Persuasion nourished amid rose-flowers . . . myrtles, and violets and helichryse, and apples, and roses, and smooth bay-tree, what time the wakeful noisy dawn rouseth up the nightingales).

The beautiful expression in *Adeline*—

Those *dew-lit eyes* of thine—

is apparently borrowed from Collins's *Ode to Pity*:

And eyes of *dewy light*.

How the merry blue-bell rings  
To the mosses underneath :

This conceit, hardly worth the stealing, seems to have been appropriated from Shelley:—

And the hyacinth, purple and white and blue,  
Which flung from its bells a sweet peal anew  
Of music (*The Sensitive Plant*, i.).

In *Margaret*—

The morn . . . . .  
Moving through a *fleecy* night—

reminds us of Milton, who describes the moon as

Stooping through a *fleecy* cloud.

The ballad of *Oriana* was evidently suggested by the old ballad of *Helen of Kirkconnel*, both poems being based on a similar incident, and both being the passionate soliloquy of the bereaved lover, though Tennyson's treatment of the subject is all his own. The expression *tears of blood*—

I feel the tears of blood arise—

recalls Ford, who more cautiously qualifies it, 'Tis Pity she's a Whore (act i. sc. 1) :—

Wash every word thou utterest  
*In tears* (and if 't be possible) of blood.

The 'full-sail'd verse' in *Eleänore* recalls Shakespeare's eighty-sixth sonnet—

The *full sail* of his great *verse*;

while the image in the passage describing love—

*His bow-string slacken'd, languid Love*  
Leaning his cheek upon his hand—

was no doubt suggested by Horace, *Odes*, III. xxvii. 66-8 :—

Aderat querenti  
. *Perfidum* ridens Venus et *remisso*  
Filius arcu

(And as she complained she saw Venus there treacherously smiling, and Venus's son, too, with unstrung bow).

The *yellow-banded bees*:

Cf. Keats's 'yellow-girted bees' (*Endymion*, i.). The whole of the passage beginning

My heart a charmèd slumber keeps—

is little more than an adaptation of Sappho's incomparable ode, filtered, perhaps, through the version of Catullus.

The incident related in the sonnet on Alexander is taken from Arrian, *De Exped. Alexandri*, lib. iii. chap. iii. and iv. The allusion to the naphtha-pits shows that the poet had been reading Plutarch's Life of Alexander.

This brings us to the end of the first group, a series of very slight studies, in which the influences

most perceptible are, perhaps, the Greek lyric poets, Keats, and Coleridge,<sup>1</sup> though they prove how decidedly, even in these early days, Tennyson had formed those habits of careful study and wide reading which ever afterwards distinguished him. As we go on to consider the poems in Group II. we shall see how, as his genius developed, his studious learning and his powers of assimilation grew in proportion. Wider and wider grows the range of his reading, more and more exquisite and consummate the skill with which he uses his materials.

<sup>1</sup> Coleridge was, so far as I know, the first English poet who discovered the strange effect produced by a flash of prosaic definiteness of detail in the midst of vague and dreamy pomp. Thus in *Kubla Khan* :—

*Five miles* meandering with a mazy motion,  
Through wood and dale the sacred river ran.

So Tennyson in *Eleänore* :—

Thou wert born, on a summer morn,  
*A mile* beneath the cedar-wood;

and it is employed habitually in these early poems. It became afterwards, notably in Rossetti, a mere trick.

## CHAPTER III

## GROUP II.—THE LADY OF SHALOTT, ETC.

*The Lady of Shalott*.—A study in fancy from the Arthurian Romances, Shalott being a form, through the French, of Astolat. According to Sir Francis Palgrave (*Selections from the Lyric Poems of Lord Tennyson*, p. 257) the poem was suggested by an Italian romance upon the *Donna di Scalotta*. On what authority this is said I know not, nor can I identify the romance referred to.<sup>1</sup> It seems to owe as much to Coleridge as to any one.

‘Tirra, lirra’ by the river  
Sang Sir Lancelot :

A charming onomatopœia, not coined by Tennyson but by Shakespeare as a variant on the French :—

The lark that tirra, lirra chants  
(*Winter’s Tale*, act iv. sc. 2).

<sup>1</sup> It is possible that the novel which is referred to by Sir F. Palgrave is *Novella LXXXI.*, in a collection of novels entitled *Libro di Novelle*, printed at Milan in 1804, which tells but very briefly the story of Elaine’s love and death. ‘Qui conta,’ so runs the heading, ‘come la Damigella di Scalot mori per amore di Lancialotto di Lac.’ And this is the more likely as Sir Francis says that the poem was suggested by a novel ‘in which Camelot, unlike the Celtic tradition, was placed near the sea.’ In this novel it is placed near the sea : ‘Il mare la guidò a Camalot, e ristette alla riva.’ If this be, as it appears to be, the novel referred to, Tennyson’s poem owes nothing to it.

*Mariana in the South* has an interesting parallel, so far at least as a lyric poem can be parallel with a poem cast in narrative form, in *La Pia*, a poem of great power and beauty written by Benedetto Sestini. Sestini finds his poem on the famous passage in the *Purgatorio* which alludes to the story of La Pia (*Purg.* v. 133), and he gives us the picture of this hapless wife pining forlorn amid the torrid horrors of the Maremma. The points of resemblance between Tennyson's poem and Sestini's lie in the position of the two women and in the graphic power with which the sultry landscape surrounding them is described. The singularly beautiful expression—

Large Hesper glitter'd on her tears—

reminds us of Keats's

No light  
Could glimmer on their tears (*Hyper.* bk. ii.).

In *The Two Voices* the dialogue, or rather the part filled in it by the voice persuading death, seems to have been suggested by Lucretius (lib. iii. 931–1052) :—

Or will one beam be less intense  
When thy peculiar difference  
Is cancell'd in the world of sense ?

Cf. Byron's *Lara*, canto ii. sect. i., the passage beginning, 'And grieve what may,' &c., also West's *Ad Amicos* towards the end, Mitford's *Gray*, quarto ed. vol. ii. p. 16.

The lines describing the insensibility of the dead man to the world and all that he left in it—

His sons grow up that bear his name,  
Some grow to honour, some to shame,—  
But he is chill to praise or blame—

recall Job xiv. 21—

His sons come to honour, and he knoweth it not ; and they are brought low, but he perceiveth it not of them ;

just as the lines—

He will not hear the north-wind rave,  
Nor, moaning, household shelter crave  
From winter rains that beat his grave.

High up the vapours fold and swim :  
About him broods the twilight dim :  
The place he knew forgetteth him—

recall the weird and powerful lines of Henry More :—

Their rotten relics lurk close underground ;  
With living wight no sense nor sympathy  
They have at all : nor hollowing thundering sound  
Of roaring winds that cold mortality  
Can wake, ywrapt in sad Fatality.  
To horse's hoof that beats his grassie dore  
He answers not : the moon in silency  
Doth pass by night, and all bedew him o'er  
With her cold humid rayes : but he feels not Heaven's power  
(*Psychozoia*, canto ii. st. 20).

Again, the lines—

Moreover, something is or seems,  
That touches me with mystic gleams,  
Like glimpses of forgotten dreams—  
Of something felt, like something here ;  
Of something done I know not where

(cf. the parallel passages in Tennyson's first sonnet and in *The Ancient Sage*)—embody what has often found embodiment before. Wordsworth's lines in the *Ode on the Intimations of Immortality* furnish an interesting illustration :—

But there's a tree, of many, one,  
 A single field which I have look'd upon;  
 Both of them speak of something that is gone.  
 The pansy at my feet  
 Doth the same tale repeat.

Sir Walter Scott in *Guy Mannering* has described the same phenomenon in a more homely way in prose. 'How often,' says Henry Bertram, 'do we find ourselves in society which we have never before met, and yet feel impressed with a mysterious and ill-defined consciousness that neither the scene, the speaker, nor the subject are entirely new—nay, feel as if we could anticipate that part of the conversation which has not yet taken place' (*Guy Mannering*, ch. xli.). See, too, Shelley's *Prose Works* for a very remarkable illustration of this (*Speculations on Metaphysics*, v. 4). Human nature must be the same in all ages, and yet I have never met with any allusion to this phenomenon—and I can speak from somewhat extensive reading among the Greek mystics and philosophers—in ancient writers.

He owns the fatal gift of eyes :

Cf. Plato, *Phædo*, x. :—

ἄρα ἔχει ἀλήθειάν τινα ὅψις τε καὶ ἀκοὴ τοῖς ἀνθρώποις, ἢ τά γε τοιαῦτα καὶ οἱ ποιηταὶ ἡμῖν ἀεὶ θρυλοῦσιν, ὅτι οὗτοι ἀκούομεν ἀκριβὲς οὐδὲν οὔτε ὅρωμεν;

(Have sight and hearing any truth in them? are they not, as poets are always telling us, inaccurate witnesses?)

It is hardly necessary to say that the proper commentary on the whole of this passage in Tennyson's poem is Plato *passim*, but the *Phædo* particularly; cf. especially from marginal p. 65 to 68, and again p. 79; cf. too *Republic*, VII, vii, and X, iv.—v.

But to proceed. The beautiful line—

You scarce could see the grass for flowers—  
is an echo of Peele's

Ye may ne see for peeping flowers the grass  
(*Arraignment of Paris*, i. 1).

In *The Miller's Daughter* the graceful song beginning, 'It is the miller's daughter,' is, for the most part, almost an adaptation of a portion of an ode of Ronsard (*Odes*, bk. iv. ode 26). Compare 'I would be the girdle' and 'I would be the necklace,' &c., with—

Je voudrois estre le riban  
Qui serre ta belle poitrine  
Je voudrois estre le carquan  
Qui orne la gorge yvoirine,  
Je voudrois estre tout autour  
Le coral qui tes lèvres touche,  
Afin de baiser nuict et jour  
Tes belles lèvres et ta bouche.

But the original of both is the pretty ode in the *Pseudo-Anacreon*, 22 (20) :—

ἔγώ δ' ἔσοπτρον εἶην,  
ὅπως ἀεὶ βλέπης με·  
ἔγώ χιτῶν γενοίμην,  
ὅπως ἀεὶ φορῆς με·  
καὶ ταινίη δὲ μαστῶν,  
· · · · ·  
καὶ σάνδαλον γενοίμην·  
μόνον ποσὶν πατεῖ με

(Would that I were a mirror, that thou mightest be ever gazing at me; would that I were a tunic, that thou mightest always wear me; and thy breast-band; and would I were a sandal; only trample me with thy feet).

Compare also the two charming epigrams in the

*Palatine Anthology*, v. 83, 84, and the scholion quoted in Athenaeus, *Deip.* xv. c. 50.

In *Fatima* we have another reminiscence of Sappho's great ode, though it owes, perhaps, more to the magnificent fragment of Ibycus (Frag. i.); but there is one passage which bears a singularly close resemblance to one in the second book of Achilles Tatius's *Clitophon and Leucippe*, bk. ii. :—

O Love ! O fire ! once he drew  
With one long kiss my whole soul thro'  
My lips.

ἢδε [ψυχὴ] ταραχθεῖσα τῷ φιλήματι πάλλεται, εἰ δὲ μὴ τοῖς σπλάγχνοις ἦν δεδεμένη, ἡκολούθησεν ἀν ἐλκυσθεῖσα ἄνω τοῖς φιλήμασιν

(Her soul, distracted by the kiss, throbs, and, had it not been close bound by the flesh, would have followed, drawn upward by the kisses).

This brings us to Tennyson's first important poem, *Œnone*; and here, as might be expected, he draws largely on the classics. It is hardly necessary to say that the poem is in form modelled partly on the Alexandrian idyll—such an idyll, for example, as the second idyll of Theocritus or the *Megara* or *Europa* of Moschus—and partly, perhaps, on the narratives in the *Metamorphoses* of Ovid, to which the opening bears a typical resemblance.<sup>1</sup> It is possible that the poem may have been suggested by Beattie's *Judgment of Paris*, which tells the story, and tells it with power and eloquence, on the same lines on which it is told here, though it is not placed in the mouth of *Œnone*. Beattie's poem opens with an elaborate description of Ida and of Troy in the distance. Paris, the husband

<sup>1</sup> Cf. for example Diana's valley and cave, *Met.* iii. 155,

of Oenone, is one afternoon confronted with the three goddesses, who are, as in the present idyll, elaborately delineated as symbolising what they here symbolise; each makes her speech and offers what each has to offer—worldly dominion, wisdom, sensual enjoyment. The speeches made by them will not, of course, bear comparison with the speeches of Tennyson's goddesses, but the general resemblance between Beattie's work and Tennyson's is certainly striking. The scene is described, *more suo*, by Apuleius (*Met. lib. x. 30-32*). But to come to detail:—

many-fountain'd Ida:

The epithet is of course Homer's *πολυπιδαξ*, his stock epithet for Ida. Cf. *Iliad*, viii. 47; xiv. 283; xx. 59, 218. The line—

For now the noonday quiet holds the hill—

is a curiously literal translation of a line in Callimachus, *Lavacrum Palladis*, 72—

*μεσαμβρινὰ δ' εἰχ' ὅπος ἀσυχία*

(The noonday quiet held the hill)—

a poem on which Tennyson again draws in his *Tiresias*. So

The lizard with his shadow on the stone  
Rests like a shadow

is a detail in the sultry summer day, suggested, no doubt, by Theocritus (*Idyll vii. 22*)—

*ἀνίκα δὴ καὶ σαῦρος ἐφ' αίμασιαῖσι καθεύδει*

(When, indeed, the very lizard is sleeping on the loose stones of the wall).

A little later on the line—

Mine eyes are full of tears, my heart of love—

is taken almost without alteration from *Henry VI.*  
Part II. act ii. scene 3 :—

Mine eyes are full of tears, my heart of grief.

The charm of married brows :

This is the *σύνοφρος κόρα*, ‘the maid of the meeting eyebrows,’ of Theocritus (*Idyll* viii. 72), and the

*σύνοφρυν*

*βλεφάρων ἵτνν κελαινήν* (*Pseudo-Anacreon*, xv.)

(The dark arch of brows that meet).

The whole of the beautiful passage—

And at their feet the crocus brake like fire,  
Violet, amaracus, and asphodel,  
Lotus and lilies.

And o'er him flow'd a *golden cloud*, and lean'd  
Upon him, *slowly dropping fragrant dew*—

is taken, with one or two additions and alterations in the names of the flowers, from *Iliad*, xiv. 347–52 (with a reminiscence, no doubt, of the gorgeous lines in *Par. Lost*, bk. iv. 695–702) :—

*τοῖσι δ' ὑπὸ χθῶν δῖα φύεν νεοθηλέα ποίην,*  
*λωτόν θ' ἐρσήεντα, ἵδε κρόκον, ἡδ' ὑάκινθον*  
*πυκνὸν καὶ μαλακόν. . . . .*  
*. . . . . ἐπὶ δὲ νεφέλην ἔσσαντο*  
*καλὴν χρυσείην · στιλπνὰ δ' ἀπέπιπτον ἔερσαι*

(And beneath them the divine earth caused to spring up fresh new grass, and dewy lotus, and crocus, and hyacinth, thick and soft; and they were clothed over with a cloud beauteous, golden; and from it kept falling glittering dew-drops).

Nor is the happy touch about the crocus breaking like fire original, being little more than an inter-

pretrative version of Sophocles's *χρυσαυγής κρόκος* (*Ed. Col.* 685), with a memory, perhaps, of Wordsworth—

flowers that *set the hills on fire* (*Ruth*).

The noble sentiment in the lines—

because right is right, to follow right  
Were wisdom in the scorn of consequence—

is, of course, a commonplace in Aristotle and other philosophers of antiquity, but it may be interesting to put beside it a passage from Cicero (*De Finibus*, ii. 14, 45) :—

Honestum id intelligimus quod tale est ut, detractâ omni utilitate, sine ulla præmiis fructibusve per se ipsum possit jure laudari

(We are to understand by the truly honourable that which, setting aside all consideration of utility, may be rightly praised in itself, exclusive of any prospect of reward or compensation).

The lines—

I know

That wheresoe'er I go by night or day  
*All earth and air seem only burning fire*—

may be compared with Webster (*Duchess of Malfi*, act iv. sc. 2) :—

The heaven o'er my head seems made of molten brass,  
The earth of flaming sulphur.

The framework of *The Palace of Art*, or the suggestion rather for that framework, is to be found in Ecclesiastes ii. 1-17. The picture of Europa—

Or sweet Europa's mantle blew unclasp'd,  
From off her shoulder backward borne :  
From one hand droop'd a crocus : one hand grasp'd  
The mild bull's golden horn—

may be compared with Moschus's picture of her, which appears to have suggested it :—

ἡ δ' ἄρ' ἐφεξῆμένη Ζηνὸς βοέοις ἐπὶ νώτοις  
τῇ μὲν ἔχεν ταύρου δολιχὸν κέρας, ἐν χερὶ δ' ἄλλῃ  
εἶνε πορφυρέας κόλπου πτύχας. . . .

κολπώθῃ δ' ὥμοισι πέπλος (*Idyll* ii. 121-5)

(Then, seated on the back of the divine bull, with one hand did she grasp the bull's long horn, and with the other she was catching up the purple folds of her garment, and the robe on her shoulders was swelled out).

See too the beautiful picture of the same scene in Achilles Tatius's *Clitophon and Leucippe*, lib. i. *ad initium*. The picture of Homer bears some resemblance to Pope's picture of him in *The Temple of Fame*, and should be compared with it (*Temple*, 184-7). The expression 'the first of those who know' is obviously from Dante—

Vidi il maestro *di color che sanno* (*Inferno*, iv. 181)  
(I saw the master of those who know).

The fine expression—

God, before whom ever lie bare  
The abysmal deeps of Personality—

was borrowed evidently from young Hallam's *Theodicea Novissima* :—

That, indeed [*i.e.* Redemption], is in the power of God's election, with whom alone rest the *abysmal secrets of personality* (*HALLAM'S Remains*, edit. 1834, p. 132).

The sentiment in *Lady Clara Vere de Vere*—

'Tis only noble to be good—

recalls a line in a famous poem—

And, to be noble, we'll be good—

(Lines usually attributed to J. G. Cooper. Lewis's *Miscell.* p. 53),

and has of course been repeated frequently but it may be worth comparing the following passage in Menander :—

ὅς ἀν εὐ γεγονὼς ἦ τῇ φύσει πρός τ' ἀγαθὰ  
καν Αἰθίοψ ἦ, μῆτέρ, ἐστιν εὐγενής

(MENANDER, ed. Meineke, p. 191)

(Whoever has by nature been well disposed to virtue, even though he be an Ethiopian, mother, he is a gentleman).

See, too, the fragment of the *Cnidia* (Meincke, p. 98), Juvenal, *Sat.* viii. 20, and Dante, *Convito* (Canzone opening *Trat. Quart.* 101-2) :—

E gentilezza dovunque virtute ;  
Ma no virtute ov' ella.

In *The May Queen* the phrase—and weirdly vivid it is—

There came a sweeter token *when the night and morning meet*—

is transferred from Mallet's *William and Margaret* :—

The silent solemn hour  
*When night and morning meet.*

The *Lotos-Eaters* is of course founded on the *Odyssey*, ix. 82 *sqq.* But the poet has laid other poets under contribution for his enchanting poem, notably Bion, Moschus, Spenser (description of the Idle Lake, *Faerie Queene*, bk. ii. canto vi.), and Thomson (*Castle of Indolence*). Spenser and Thomson are the most potent influences in the poem. Compare, for example, the following verses :—

Was nought around but images of rest,  
Sleep-soothing groves, and quiet lawns between,  
And flowery beds that slumberous influence kest  
From poppies breathed and beds of pleasant green.

Meanwhile unnumber'd glittering streamlets play'd  
 And hurlèd everywhere their water's sheen,  
 That as they bicker'd through the sunny glade,  
 Though restless, still themselves a lulling murmur made.

A pleasant land of drowsihed it was,  
 Of dreams that wave before the half-shut eye,  
 And of gay castles in the clouds that pass  
 For ever flushing round a summer sky

(*Castle of Indolence*, canto i. st. 3-6).

Turning to Bion and Moschus, how exactly parallel are the following passages :—

All things have rest, why should we toil alone ?

• • • • •  
 Death is the end of life ; ah, why  
 Should life all labour be ?

εἰς πόσον ἀδειλοὶ καμάτως κ' εἰς ἔργα πονεῦμες ;  
 ψυχὴν δ' ἄχρι τίνος ποτὶ κέρδεα καὶ ποτὶ τέχνας  
 βάλλομες, ἴμειροντες δὲν πολὺ πλήνονος ὅλβω ;  
 λαθόμεθ' η ἄρα πάντες ὅτι θνατοὶ γενόμεσθα  
 χῶς βραχὺν ἐκ Μοίρας λάχομεν χρόνον

(BION, *Idyll* v. 11-15)

(For how long, wretched that we are, are we to toil and labour ? How long are we to throw our souls away on greed and toilsome arts, ever yearning after more wealth ? Surely, surely we have all forgotten that we are mortal and how short is the span allotted us by Fate).

Is there any peace  
 In ever climbing up the climbing wave ?

• • • • •  
 How sweet it were, hearing the downward stream.

• • • • •  
 To watch the emerald-colour'd water falling  
 Through many a woven acanthus-wreath divine !

• • • • •  
 Only to hear were sweet, stretch'd out beneath the pine.

ἢ κακὸν ὁ γριπεὺς ζώει βίον, φῶ δόμος ἀ ναῦς  
 καὶ πόνος ἐστὶ θάλασσαι . . . . .  
 αὐτὰρ ἐμοὶ γλυκὺς ὑπνος ὑπὸ πλατάνῳ βαθυφύλλῳ,  
 καὶ παγᾶς φιλέοιμι τὸν ἐγγύθεν ἥχον ἀκούειν  
 ἀ τέρπει ψοφέοισα τὸν ἄγριον, οὐχὶ ταράσσει

(MOSCHUS, *Idyll* v.).

(Evil surely is the fisherman's life, whose home is his ship and the sea his toiling-place. But to me sweet is sleep beneath the broad-leaved plane-tree, and may it be my pleasure to hearken to the murmur of the fountain near, which as it murmurs delights the husbandman, and does not harass him).

His voice was *thin as voices from the grave*:

Cf. Theocritus of the voice of Hylas—

ἀραιὰ δ' ἵκετο φωνά (Idyll xiii.)

(Thin came the voice);

and Virgil's ghost-voices—

pars tollere vocem  
*Exiguam* (Æn. vi. 492);

and Ovid of the voice of the ghost of Remus—

umbra . . . visa est . . .  
 . . . hæc *exiguo murmure* verba loqui (Fasti, v. 457).

See, too, Keats's *Isabella*, xxxvi., of the voice of the ghost of Lorenzo. The lines—

Hateful is the dark blue sky,  
 Vaulted o'er the dark blue sea—

remind us of Virgil's

Tædet cœli convexa tueri (Æn. iv. 451)

(Heaven's vault is weariness to look upon).

Is there any peace  
 In ever *climbing up* the climbing wave ?

We have here an interesting illustration of Tennyson's exact scholarship; this touch was no doubt suggested by Virgil's

descendi navibus æquor (*AEn.* i. 381),

which does not mean, as it is usually explained, 'I embarked upon,' but 'I *climbed* up the sea'—a splendidly graphical touch, as Tennyson has seen. Cf. Shakespeare's

And let the labouring barque climb hills of seas  
(*Othello*, act ii. sc. 1),

though the passage in Shakespeare is not really parallel.

The conclusion of the poem—the picture of the gods of Epicurus—was immediately suggested by Lucretius (iii. 15 *sqq.*). If the poet has not drawn on the *Icaromenippus* of Lucian, that inimitable dialogue from chapter xxv. to the end furnishes an excellent commentary on Tennyson's picture of those gods and what they see.

*The Dream of Fair Women* was, as the poet himself tells us, inspired by Chaucer's *Legend of Good Women*, though the scheme of the poem bears a close resemblance to the *Trionfi* of Petrarch. The lines—

As when a great thought strikes along the brain  
And flushes all the cheek—

would certainly seem to have been suggested by a passage in the Homeric Hymn to Hermes:—

ώς δ' ὥπότ' ᾠκὺ νόημα διὰ στέρνοιο περήσῃ,  
ἀνέρος' . . . . .  
αἱ δέ τε διηθῶσιν ἀπ' ὁφθαλμῶν ἀμαργαί

(As when a thought passes swiftly through the breast of a man, and the sparkles flash from his eyes).

With Tennyson's picture of the sacrifice of Iphigenia should of course be compared the picture of the same scene by Æschylus (*Agamemnon*, 225-49) and Lucretius (i. 85-100).

The *bright death quiver'd*:

With this may be compared a precisely similar expression (for surely there can be no doubt of the true interpretation, with the parallel afforded by Virgil's use of *vulnus*) in the *Electra* of Sophocles, 1395—

*νεακόνητον αἷμα χειροῖν ἔχων*

(With the newly-whetted blood [*i.e.* instrument that will draw blood] in his hand).

I would the white cold heavy-plunging foam,  
Whirl'd by the wind, had roll'd me deep below:

She expresses a similar wish in *Iliad*, iii. 73-4.

The skill with which the poet has, in the picture of Cleopatra, given us, as it were in quintessence, Shakespeare's superb creation needs no commentary. One illustration may suffice:—

And the wild kiss, when fresh from war's alarms,  
My Hercules, my Roman Antony,  
My mailèd Bacchus leapt into my arms:

Cf. *Anton. and Cleopatra*, act iv. sc. 8:—

O thou day o' the world!  
Chain mine arm'd neck, leap thou, attire and all,  
Through proof of harness, to my heart, and there  
Ride on the pants triumphing.

How like a glow-worm in the sun is Tennyson's stanza to this! It is worth noticing that the passage—

I died a Queen. The Roman soldier found  
Me lying dead, my crown about my brows,

is a splendid *transfusion* of the last lines in Horace's *Odes*, I. xxxvii. :—

Invidens  
Privata deduci superbo  
Non humilis mulier triumpho

(Disdaining to be escorted unqueened, in proud triumph, no grovelling woman she).

Once, like the moon, I made  
The ever-shifting currents of the blood  
According to my humour ebb and flow:

This appears to have been suggested by Susan Carter's words in Ford's *Witch of Edmonton*, act ii. sc. 2 :—

You are the powerful moon of my blood's sea,  
To make it ebb and flow into my face  
As your looks change.

With that she tore her robe apart, and half  
The polish'd argent of her breast to sight  
Laid bare

is an almost literal translation from the *Hecuba*, 556 :—

λαβοῦσα πέπλους ἐξ ἄκρας ἐπωμίδος  
ἔρρηξε . . . . .  
μαστούς τ' ἔδειξε στέργα θ', ὡς ἀγάλματος,  
καλλιστα

(She took her robes and tore them right from the shoulder, and bared her breasts and bosom, most lovely, as of a statue),

the 'polish'd argent' exactly and most happily *interpreting* the *idea* suggested by *ἀγάλματος*,

Saw God divide the night with flying flame:

Cf. Horace, *Odes*, I. xxxiv. 5-6 :—

Diespiter  
Igni corusco nubila dividens

(The Father of the day dividing the storm-clouds with gleaming flame).

In the verses *To J. S.* the lines describing tears—

And tho' mine own eyes fill with dew,  
*Drawn from the spirit thro' the brain*—

were plainly suggested by the exquisite Alcaic stanza of Gray on tears :—

O lacrymarum fons tenero sacros  
*Ducentium ortus ex animo.*

The singularly beautiful image in the lines—

His *memory* long will live alone  
In all our hearts, as *mournful light*  
*That broods above the fallen sun,*  
*And dwells in heaven half the night*—

seems to have been suggested by Henry Vaughan's poem—

Their very memory is fair and bright  
It glows and glitters in my cloudy breast,  
Like stars . . . . .  
Or those faint beams in which this hill is drest  
After the sun's remove (*Beyond the Veil*).

A passage also from Dryden may be compared :—

If I fall  
I shall be like myself: a setting sun  
Should leave a track of glory in the skies  
(*Don Sebastian*, act i. sc. 1).

In the lines from *On a Mourner*—

such as those

Once heard at dead of night to greet  
Troy's wandering prince, so that he rose  
With sacrifice, &c.—

the allusion is to Virgil (*Æn.* iii. 147 *sqq.*).

The expression in the verses *Of old sat Freedom,*  
&c.—

Who, God-like, grasps *the triple forks*—

is borrowed from the Romans, being the ‘*trisulcum fulmen*,’ or ‘*trisulci ignes*,’ or ‘*trisulca tela*’ of the Roman poets. Cf. Ovid, *Met.* ii. 848; id. *Ibis*, 471; Seneca, *Hippol.* 190; *Thyestes*, 1090.

The phrase in *Love thou thy land*—

Across the brazen *bridge of war*—

is of course Homer's

ἐπὶ πτολέμοιο γεφύρας (*Il.* viii. 549).

## CHAPTER IV

## GROUP III.—ENGLISH IDYLLS, AND OTHER POEMS

No poems of Tennyson are more pleasing than his *English Idylls*. The honour of having given the first models for these belongs to Southey, who was followed by Wordsworth in *Michael* and *The Brothers*. Southey's poems are entitled by him *English Eclogues*, and were composed between 1797 and 1803. To these poems he prefixes a short note: 'The following Eclogues, I believe, bear no resemblance to any poems in our language. This species of composition has become popular in Germany, and I was induced to attempt it by an account of the German idylls given me in conversation. They cannot properly be styled imitations, as I am ignorant of that language at present, and have never seen any translation or specimens in this kind' (Southey's *Poetical Works*, 1-vol. edit. p. 624). They are eight in number, and are entitled *The Old Mansion House*, *The Grandmother's Tale*, *Hannah*, *The Sailor's Mother*, *The Witch*, *The Ruined Cottage*, *The Last of the Family*, *The Alderman's Funeral*. In point of merit there is no comparison between the richness, grace, and beauty of Tennyson and the bald, flat, and spiritless commonplace of Southey.

But how closely Tennyson's Idylls are, in point of form, modelled on Southey's, will be at once apparent to any one who will take the trouble to compare them.

The illustrations of the *Morte d'Arthur* will be given in the section on the *Idylls of the King*. In *The Gardener's Daughter* we trace the influence of Theocritus. The passage—

From the woods  
Came voices of the well-contented doves, &c.—

is simply a parody of Theocritus (*Idyll* vii. 139 *sqq.*), just as in the lines—

all the land  
• • • • •  
Smelt of the coming summer—

we have a reminiscence of his

$\pi\acute{a}n\tau'$   $\hat{\omega}\sigma\delta\epsilon\nu$   $\theta\acute{e}\rho\epsilon\sigma$   $\mu\acute{a}l\alpha$   $\pi\acute{i}\sigma\sigma\sigma$  (*id.* 143)

(All savoured of a very rich summer).

So again in

The drowsy hours, dispensers of all good

we have a reminiscence of *Id.* xv. 104, but see *infra*. The physical effect of joy on the spirits so happily described in the lines—

I rose up  
Full of his bliss, and following her dark eyes  
*Felt earth as air beneath me*—

had been expressed also with equal felicity by Massinger (*City Madam*, act iii. sc. 3) :—

I am sublimed. Gross earth  
Supports me not. *I walk on air.*

The whole plot of the poem standing next, *Dora*, to

the minutest details is taken from a prose story of Miss Mitford's, namely, *The Tale of Dora Creswell* (*Our Village*, vol. iii. pp. 242-253), the only important alterations being that of the names: Farmer Creswell, Dora Creswell, Walter Creswell, and Mary Hay, becoming respectively Allan, Dora, William, and Mary Morrison. How carefully the poet has preserved the picturesque touches of his original may be seen by comparing the following two passages:—

And Dora took the child and went her way  
 Across the wheat, and sat upon a mound  
 That was unsown, where many poppies grew.  
 . . . . . She rose and took  
 The child once more, and sat upon the mound;  
 And made a little wreath of all the flowers  
 That grew about, and tied it round his hat:

A beautiful child lay on the ground at some little distance, whilst a young girl, resting from the labour of reaping, was twisting a rustic wreath of enamelled cornflowers, brilliant poppies, snow-white lily-bines, and light fragile harebells, mingled with tufts of the richest wheat-ears, round its hat. . . .

That the poet's indebtedness to the novel has not been intimated, is due no doubt to the fact that Tennyson, like Gray, leaves his commentators to track him to his raw material; though why he should have prefixed a preface to *The Golden Supper* acknowledging his debt to Boccaccio, and should have omitted to do so in the case of *Dora*, it is difficult to understand. The author of *Our Village* has certainly more to gain from the honour than the author of the *Decamerone*.

In *Audley Court*, the graphic touch, the  
*Pillar'd dusk* of sounding sycamores,

is from Milton:—

*A pillar'd shade*  
High over-arch'd (*Par. Lost*, ix. 1106-7).

In *Edwin Morris*, in 'finish'd to the finger-nail,' and 'Sneeze out a full God-bless-you right and left,' we have illustrations of what has been referred to before. An odd coincidence in this poem is worth noticing. Edwin Morris's love appears to have possessed Julia's seal—

She sent a note, the seal an *elle vous suit*.

Julia's letter to Don Juan was despatched in an envelope—

The seal a sunflower—*elle vous suit partout*  
(*Don Juan*, canto i. st. xcvi.).

For the source of *St. Simeon Stylites* and a necessary commentary on it see Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*, ch. xxxvii. (Smith's Gibbon), vol. iv. p. 320. When the saint, alluding to his mortal body, observes—

This dull chrysalis  
Cracks into shining wings—

we are reminded of Carew's original but ludicrous couplet—

The soul  
Broke the outward shell of sin  
And so was hatch'd a cherubin  
(CAREW'S *Poems*, lix.).

or still more immediately of Rogers's epigram comparing man on earth to the inglorious chrysalis, and man after death to the full-fledged butterfly (Rogers's *Poem to a Butterfly*).

In *Love and Duty*, the lines describing the lovers parting—

The summer night, that paus'd  
 Among her stars to hear us; stars that hung  
 Love-charm'd to listen: all the wheels of Time  
 Spun round in station, but the end had come—

irresistibly remind us of a similar scene in Wordsworth's *Vaudracour and Julia* :—

The galaxy display'd  
 Her fires, that like mysterious pulses beat  
 Aloft, momentous but uneasy bliss:  
 To their full hearts the universe seem'd hung  
 On that brief meeting's slender filament.

The lines about the hours—

The slow sweet hours that bring us all things good,  
 The slow sad hours that bring us all things ill, &c.—

were of course suggested by Theocritus, *Id. xv.* 104—5:—

βάρδισται μακάρων Ὡραι φίλαι, ἀλλὰ ποθειναι  
 ἔρχονται πάντεσσι βροτοῖς αἰεὶ τι φέροισσι

(Tardiest of the Happy Ones are the beloved Hours, but  
 greatly yearned for do they come, ever bringing some gift  
 for all men).

The very fine image, which concludes the poem, of  
 Morning driving

her plough of pearl  
 Far furrowing into light the mounded rack,

an image repeated with variation in *The Princess*, iii.—

Morn in the white wake of the morning star  
 Came furrowing all the orient into gold—

appears to have been suggested by Greene:—

Seest thou not Lycaon's son,  
The hardy *plough-swain unto mighty Jove,*  
*Hath traced his silver furrows in the heaven?*  
(GREENE'S *Orlando Furioso*, act i. sc. 3.)

We now come to *Ulysses*. The germ, the spirit, and the sentiment of this poem are from the twenty-sixth canto of Dante's *Inferno*. Tennyson has indeed done little but fill in the sketch of the great Florentine. As is usual with him in all cases where he borrows, the details and minuter portions of the work are his own; he has added grace, elaboration, and symmetry; he has called in the assistance of other poets. A rough crayon draught has been metamorphosed into a perfect picture. As the resemblances lie not so much in expression as in the general tone, we will in this case substitute for the original a literal version. *Ulysses* is speaking:—

Neither fondness for my son, nor reverence for my aged sire,  
nor the due love which ought to have gladdened Penelope,  
could conquer in me the ardour which I had to become experienced  
in the world, and in human vice and worth. I put out  
into the deep open sea with but one ship, and with that small  
company which had not deserted me. . . . I and my companions  
were old and tardy when we came to that narrow pass where  
Hercules assigned his landmarks. 'O brothers,' I said, 'who  
through a hundred thousand dangers have reached the West,  
deny not to this the brief vigil of your senses that remain,  
experience of the unpeopled world beyond the sun. Consider  
your origin; ye were not formed to live like brutes, but to follow  
virtue and knowledge.' . . . Night already saw the other pole  
with all its stars, and ours so low that it rose not from the  
ocean floor (*Inferno*, xxvi. 94-126).

Now compare the key verses of Tennyson's poem.  
*Ulysses* speaks:—

I cannot rest from travel : I will drink  
 Life to the lees : all times I have enjoy'd  
 Greatly, have suffer'd greatly, both with those  
 That loved me, and alone. . . .  
 How dull it is to pause, to make an end !

• . . . . and vile it were  
 For some three suns to store and hoard myself,  
 And this gray spirit yearning in desire  
 To follow knowledge. . . . .

There lies the port : the vessel puffs her sail :  
 There gloom the dark broad seas. My mariners,  
 Souls that have toil'd, and wrought, and thought with me—  
 That ever with a frolic welcome took  
 The thunder and the sunshine. . . .

• . . . . you and I are old.

Death closes all : but something ere the end,  
 Some work of noble note, may yet be done.

• . . . . Come, my friends,  
 'Tis not too late to seek a newer world.  
 Push off . . . for my purpose holds  
 To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths  
 Of all the western stars, until I die.

In the poem the imitations from Homer and Virgil  
 are too obvious to need specifying. One may be  
 noted :—

Sitting well in order, smite  
 The sounding furrows,

from *Odyssey*, iv. 580, and ix. 104 :—

$\epsilon\xi\eta\varsigma\ \delta'\ \epsilon\xi\mu\epsilon\nu\iota\ \pi\omega\iota\eta\ \alpha\lambda\ \tau\upsilon\pi\tau\omega\ \epsilon\rho\epsilon\tau\mu\omega\iota\varsigma$

(And sitting in order they kept smiting the hoary brine with  
 their oars).

The reminiscences from Horace, Teucer's speech to  
 his comrades, *Odes*, I. vii. 24-32, are equally unmis-  
 takable. So too Virgil's *pluvias Hyadas*, *AEn.* i. 748,  
 and iii. 516.

The style of *Tithonus*, in diction, tone, and colour alike, is obviously modelled on the soliloquies in the Greek plays, but particularly on those in Sophocles ; its exact counterpart in point of style would probably be the soliloquy of Ajax (*Ajax*, 645–692 and 815–865), the colour of course being richer, and the rhythm softer and more plaintive. The story is told in the Homeric *Hymn to Aphrodite*, 218–239.

Here at the quiet limit of the world :

*ναῖε παρ' ὠκεανοῖο ρόῆς, ἐπὶ πείραστι γαῖης* (Hom. *Hymn*, 227)  
(He dwelt by the ocean stream, at the limits of the earth).

A white-hair'd shadow roaming like a dream

is a transfusion of the Homeric

*σκιῇ εἴκελος ἢ καὶ ὀνείρῳ* (*Odyss.* xi. 208)  
(Like to a shadow or even a dream).

The superb image, applied to the horses of Aurora's car, that

shake the darkness from their loosen'd manes,  
And beat the twilight into flakes of fire

has been anticipated by Marston :—

See the dapple grey coursers of the morn  
*Beat up the light with their bright silver hoofs*  
(*Antonio and Mellida*, Part II. act i. sc. 1).

The 'saying learnt,' namely that

The Gods themselves cannot recall their gifts,

is of course an allusion to the well-known couplet of Agathon quoted by Aristotle (*Ethics N. vi.* 2) :—

μόνου γὰρ αὐτοῦ καὶ θεὸς στερίσκεται,  
ἀγένητα ποιεῖν ἀσσ' ἀν ἢ πεπραγμένα

(Of this thing alone is even God deprived—to make undone  
whatsoever hath been done).

Cf. too Horace, *Odes*, III. xxix. 45-48.

When Ilion *like a mist rose into towers*

is a reminiscence of Milton's Pandemonium :—

Out of the earth a fabric huge  
*Rose like an exhalation.*

I *earth in earth* forgot these empty courts :

So Stephen Hawes, *Pastime of Pleasure*, xlv. :—

When *earth in earth* hath ta'en his corrupt taste.

In *Locksley Hall* the poet seems to have laid many  
of his brethren under contribution. Early in the  
poem there is a parallel worth noting perhaps :—

Love took up the glass of Time, and turn'd it in his glowing hands;  
Every moment, lightly shaken, ran itself in golden sands.

In the poems of that elegant writer of happy trifles,  
W. R. Spencer, we find a verse—

What eye with clear account remarks  
The ebbing of his glass,  
When all its sands are diamond sparks,  
That dazzle as they pass? (SPENCER'S *Poems*, p. 166.)

The magnificent line—

And our spirits rush'd together at the touching of the lips  
looks like a reminiscence of Guarini's *Pastor Fido*,  
act ii. scene 6 :—

Ma i colpi di due labbre innamorate,  
 Quando a ferir *si va bocca con bocca*,  
 . . . . . *ove l' un alma e l' altra*  
*Corre*

(The clash of two enamoured lips when mouth strikes mouth  
 where the one soul and the other meet).

He will hold thee, when his passion shall have spent its novel  
 force,  
 Something better than his dog, a little dearer than his horse  
 finds a curious parallel in John Hall Stevenson's  
 stanza (*Works*, vol. i. p. 39) :—

As when a squire sees a maiden coy,  
 He makes a jointure,  
 And *in a fit of joy*  
*Prefers her to a pointer.*

*To decline*

On a range of lower feelings :

So the ghost in Hamlet, commenting on Gertrude's  
 similar degradation :—

*To decline*

Upon a wretch whose natural gifts were poor  
 To those of mine (*Hamlet*, act v. sc. 5).

The many-wintered crow :

Horace—

*Annosa cornix* (*Odes*, III. xvii. 13).

The beautiful expression—

Such a one do I remember *whom to look at was to love*—  
 is Burns's more beautiful—

But to see her was to love her,  
 Love but her and love for ever (*To Nancy*).

A sorrow's crown of sorrow is remembering happier things  
 is, of course, Dante's—

Nessun maggior dolore  
 Che ricordarsi del tempo felice  
 Nella miseria (*Inferno*, v. 121-3).

It has also been appropriated by Chaucer :—

For of misfortune's sharpe aduersite  
 The worste kind of infortune is this :  
 A man to have been in prosperite  
 And it remember when it passed is

(*Troilus and Cresseide*, iii. 1625, *sqq.*);

by Occleve, *Proem to De Reginime Principum*; by  
 Marini, *L'Adone*, canto xiv. st. 110—

Che non ha doglia il misero maggiore  
 Che ricordar la gioia entrò il dolore;

and by Fortiguerra, *Ricciardetto*, c. xl. st. 83. It is interesting to trace the history of the expression. Dante got it directly from Boethius (*De Consol. Philos.* II. *Prosa iv.*) :—

In omni adversitate fortunæ, infelicissimum genus est infortunii fuisse felicem et non esse.

But no one has expressed it more clearly than Pindar, who, curiously enough, implies that even in his time the sentiment had passed into a proverb :—

φαντὶ δ' ἔμμεν  
 τοῦτ' ἀνιαρότατον, καλὰ γινώσκοντ' ἀνάγκα  
 ἐκτὸς ἔχειν πόδα (*Pythian*, iv. 510-12)

(They say that this is most grievous, when acquainted with what is good, to be compelled to stand outside it).

It has found equally precise expression in Thucydides, II. xli. 5 :—

καὶ λύπη οὐχ ἀν τις μὴ πειρασάμενος ἀγαθῶν στερίσκηται, ἀλλ' οὐ ἀν ἐθὰς γενόμενος ἀφαιρεθῇ

(And sorrow is felt not for the blessings of which one is deprived without full experience of them, but of that which one loses after becoming accustomed to it),

The weird and graphic use of the word 'eye' in—

And *an eye* shall vex thee, looking ancient kindness, &c.—

forcibly recalls the similarly strange and felicitous use of *ομμα* in Sophocles' *Electra*, 902 :—

εμπαίει τι μοι  
ψυχῇ ξύνηθες ομμα

(There strikes upon my soul a familiar eye).

The cynical aspiration of the young hero in *Locksley Hall*, that he might 'burst all links of habit,' 'take some savage woman who should rear his dusky race,' be 'mated with a squalid savage,' and so get more enjoyment than he could hope for 'in this march of mind,' finds a curious parallel in Beaumont's *Philaster*, act iv. scene 2 :—

Oh, that I had been nourish'd in the woods,  
 . . . . . and not known  
 The right of crowns, nor the dissembling trains  
 Of women's looks . . . . .  
 And then had taken me some mountain girl,  
 Beaten with winds, that might have strew'd my bed  
 With leaves and reeds, and have borne at her big breasts  
 My large coarse issue. This had been a life  
 Free from vexation.

The fine image of the storm wind—

Cramming all the blast before it, *in its breast a thunderbolt*—  
 recalls Tasso's

Nuova nube di polve ecco vicina  
 Che fulgori in grembo tiene (Gerus. ix. st. 91)

(Lo, a fresh cloud of dust is near, which carries in its breast thunderbolts).

*Godiva* should be compared with Moultrie's beau-

tiful poem on the same subject; it appears to have suggested Tennyson's.

A very graphic expression in the next poem, *The Sleeping Beauty*—

The silk, star-broider'd coverlid  
Unto her limbs itself doth mould—

has evidently been transferred from Homer (*Iliad*, xxiv. 163), where he speaks of Priam—

ἐντυπὰς ἐν χλαινῇ κεκαλυμμένος

(Wrapped up in his mantle so closely as to show the contour of his limbs).

The couplet in the *Envoi of The Day Dream*—

For we are Ancients of the earth,  
And in the morning of the times—

is obviously merely a version of Bacon's famous—

Antiquitas saeculi, juventus mundi.

And waves of shadow went over the wheat (*Poet's Song*) :

Cf. Thomson's

fresher gale  
Sweeping with shadowy gusts the fields of corn  
(*Summer*, 1655).

*The Lord of Burleigh* tells the well-known story of Sarah Hoggins, who married, under the circumstances related in the poem, the Earl of Exeter. She died in 1797, sinking, so it was said, under the burden 'of an honour unto which she was not born.' See for more the *Times* for August 22, 1844.

*The Beggar Maid* was suggested either by *Romeo and Juliet*, act ii. scene 1, or by the fine ballad in Percy's *Reliques*, First Series, book ii. ballad vi.

*The Vision of Sin* was evidently suggested by Shelley's *Triumph of Life*, from which the leading ideas and much of the imagery have been derived, though Tennyson has narrowed the allegory. In his hands it simply becomes the history of the serement of a human soul through the effects of unbridled profligacy, and finds its best commentary in Byron's lyric 'There's not a joy the world can give.'

## CHAPTER V

## GROUP IV.—ENOCH ARDEN AND OTHER POEMS

*Enoch Arden* bears the same relation to its prototypes, *Southey's English Eclogues*, as *Wordsworth's Michael* bears—the connecting link, so to speak, between the *English Idylls* and this work being *Dora*. It is interesting to compare *Enoch Arden*, and particularly the part describing Enoch's return home, with *Crabbe's* touching story, *The Parting Hour*. But the framework of a portion, at all events, of the story was evidently suggested by a poem in *Miss Adelaide A. Procter's Legends and Lyrics*, entitled *Homeward Bound*. *Tennyson* has, indeed, often done little more than fill in the sketch given by her. Compare, for example, the passage describing Enoch on the island—

The mountain wooded to the peak, &c.

As down the shore he ranged, or all day long  
Sat often in the seaward-gazing gorge—

with the passage in which her hero sits brooding on the shore, over memories of his wife and child :—

Gaunt and dreary ran the mountains  
With black gorges up the land,  
Up to where the lonely desert  
Spreads her burning dreary sand,

In the gorges of the mountains  
On the plain beside the sea.

Then I gazed at the great ocean.

Nor has he forgotten the touch about the largeness of the stars in a tropical sky :—

And the glimmering *stars though larger*,

which appears as —

Then the *great stars that globed themselves* in heaven.

Compare, too, the return home and the anticipation of again meeting his wife and child :—

I would picture my dear cottage,  
See the crackly firewood burn  
And the two beside it seated.

The journey, too, through the autumn landscape to his cottage, and the picture of Annie with her little family and husband seen in the glow of the ruddy fire — in all this Tennyson simply fills in Miss Procter's sketch :—

It was evening in late autumn  
And the gusty wind blew chill,  
Autumn leaves were falling round me  
And the red sun lit the hill.

She was seated by the fire,  
In her arms she held a child.

Smiled on him who stood beside her.  
He had been an ancient comrade ;  
Not a single word we said  
While we gazed upon each other,  
He the living, I the dead.

The beautiful and pathetic touch about the dead child

was also suggested by Miss Procter's poem, so also the angelic character of Enoch :—

Nothing of farewell I utter'd,  
Save in broken words to pray  
That God in His great love would bless her;  
Then in silence pass'd away.

So, broken-hearted and uncomplaining, in the very sublimity of resignation and self-sacrifice, Miss Procter's hero sets forth and leaves them, consoling himself that the end must come before long :—

I too shall reach home and rest,  
I shall find her waiting for me,  
With our baby on her breast.

Plainly it was on this poem and not on Mrs. Gaskell's *Sylvia's Lovers*<sup>1</sup> that *Enoch Arden* was founded. In the details of the poem there are no reminiscences or parallels sufficiently striking to be worth pointing out.

The general cast and style of the idyll of *The Brook* remind us closely of Wordsworth's *Brothers*. In the charming lyric inserted there are two interesting little parallels, one with Burns's *Halloween*, and the other with the well-known Italian inscription on a sun-dial. Burns's lines are as charming as Tennyson's :—

Whyles owre a linn the burnie plays  
And thro' the glen it wimpl't,  
Whyles round a rocky scaur it strays,  
Whyles in a weil it dimpl't;  
Whyles glitter'd to the nightly rays  
Wi' bickerin dancin dazzle,  
Whyles cookit underneath the braes  
Below the spreading hazel (*Halloween*, st. 25).

<sup>1</sup> Though, curiously enough, the name of the ship in which Enoch sailed, the *Good Fortune*, is identical with the name of the ship in which Mrs. Gaskell's mariner makes his voyage.

Men may come and men may go  
But I go on for ever :

Io vado e vengo ogni giorno,  
Ma tu andrai senza ritorno.

In *Aylmer's Field* the line—

Pity, the violet on the tyrant's grave—

is, of course, an allusion to the passage in which Suetonius tells us that there were those who placed flowers on Nero's grave, hated though he was :—

Et tamen non defuerunt qui per longum tempus vernis aestivisque floribus tumulum ejus ornarent (lib. vi. *ad fin.*)

(Nevertheless there were not wanting people who continued for a long time to deck his grave with flowers of the spring and summer).

In *Sea Dreams*, the lines—

my poor venture but a fleet of glass  
Wreck'd on a reef of visionary gold—

may be compared with Pindar (Fragment 136, edit. Schneidewin) :—

πελάγει δ' ἐν πολυχρύσοιο πλούτου  
πάντες ἵσα νέομεν ψευδῆ πρὸς ἀκτάν

(And on a sea rich in golden wealth we all alike go sailing towards a beach of delusion)—

which is indeed a commentary on the whole passage in Tennyson's poem.

A useful and indeed necessary commentary on *Lucretius*, which stands next, will be a collection of the passages in the *De Rerum Naturâ* itself, and in the other Greek and Roman classics on which the poet has drawn. The anecdote, sufficiently horrible and repulsive, on which the poem is founded, is to be

found in Jerome's additions to the *Eusebian Chronicle* under the year B.C. 94—

Titus Lucretius poeta nascitur; postea amatorio poculo in furorem versus, cum aliquot libellos per intervalla insaniae conscripsisset, quos postea Cicero emendavit, propriâ se manu interfecit anno ætatis xlivi.

(Titus Lucretius the poet is born: afterwards when driven mad by a love philtre, and after he had composed, in the intervals of his insanity, several books, which Cicero afterwards revised, he committed suicide in the forty-third year of his age).

That the name of the woman who administered the philtre was Lucilia, and that she was the poet's wife, rests, I believe, on the authority of a single sentence ascribed to Seneca, but not to be found in the works of either of the Senecas:—

Livia virum suum occidit quem nimis oderat, *Lucilia* suum quem nimis amaverat

(Livia murdered her husband whom she hated excessively, and Lucilia murdered hers whom she had loved excessively).

See Bayles's *Dictionary*, article *Lucretius*. None of the editors of *Lucretius* whom I have consulted, not even Monro, throw any light on this mysterious quotation of Bayles's.<sup>1</sup>

It seem'd  
A void was made in Nature; all her bonds  
Crack'd; and I saw the flaring atom-streams  
And torrents of her myriad universe  
Ruining along the illimitable inane:

---

<sup>1</sup> This distinguished scholar has plenty to say about the use of *is* or *es* in the accusative plural of words ending in *ium* in the genitive plural, but not one word does he say about the legend which inspired Tennyson's poem.

The possibility, or rather ultimate certainty, of this dissolution is repeated over and over again in Lucretius. See lib. i. 1101–1110, the passage Tennyson was here thinking of (cf. too lib. ii. 47–48).

The magnificent word ‘ruining’ in this sense is from Milton:—

Hell saw

Heaven *ruining* from Heaven (*Par. Lost*, vi. 867).

Milton in using it thus anglicised it from the Italian ‘ruinando.’ Marini, *L’Adone*, cant. i. st. 36, employs it in this sense:—

*Ruinando* dal eterea mole.

Fly on to clash together again, and make  
Another and another frame of things  
For ever :

For this doctrine of the perpetual reciprocity of analysis and synthesis, of dissolution and re-creation, see ii. 999–1022, v. 828–836.

As the dog  
With inward yelp and restless fore-foot plies  
His function of the woodland :

This was suggested by a passage in lib. iv. 990–5:—

Venantumque canes in molli sæpe quiete  
Jactant crura tamen subito, vocesque repente  
Mittunt, et crebro redducunt naribus auras

(And the dogs of hunters often in soft repose throw about their legs and suddenly utter cries and repeatedly snuff the air with their nostrils).

Tennyson has omitted one graphic touch, the ‘repeatedly snuffing the air,’ but he has substituted another not less graphic, the ‘inward yelp.’

The . . . genial heat  
 Of Nature, when she strikes thro' the thick blood  
 Of cattle, and light is large, and lambs are glad  
 Nosing the mother's udder, and the bird  
 Makes his heart voice amid the blaze of flowers :

In these lines Tennyson has caught the one joyous note of Lucretius, his intense and keen delight in Nature, as rapturous as Shelley's. The passages which here find their echo are in lib. i. 6-20; *id.* 252-261, the particular touches being—

Perculsæ corda tuâ vi (18)  
 (With their hearts smitten by thy power);

Placatumque nitet *diffuso lumine cœlum* (9)  
 (And propitiated heaven gleams with outspread light);

Per pabula lœta  
 Corpora deponunt, et cœndens lacteus humor  
 Überibus manat distentis : hinc nova proles  
 Artibus infirmis teneras lasciva per herbas  
 Ludit, lacte mero mentes perculta novellas (257-261)

([The cattle] lay their bodies down about the joy-giving pastures, and the white milky moisture streams from the distended udders: and so a new brood with weakly limbs sports playfully over the soft grass, their young minds smitten with the love of pure milk).

The Gods, who haunt  
 The lucid interspace of world and world,  
 Where never creeps a cloud, or moves a wind,  
 Nor ever falls the least white star of snow :

Apparet divum numen sedesque quietæ  
 Quas neque concutiunt venti nec nubila nimbis  
 Aspergunt neque nix, acri concreta pruinâ,  
 Cana cadens violat, semperque innubilus æther  
 Integit (iii. 18-22)

(The divinity of the Gods is revealed and their peaceful seats,

which neither winds shake nor clouds drench with rain, nor snow, hardened by piercing frost, hurts with its hoary fall : but ever does a cloudless sky invest them).

Lucretius was, of course, himself drawing on *Odyssey*, vi. 42 *sqq.*

My master held  
That Gods there are, for all men so believe :

The reference here is to Diogenes Laertius, *Life of Epicurus*, ch. xxvii., which is the letter of Epicurus to Meneceus.

I prest my footsteps into his :

Literally from Lucretius :—

Inque tuis nunc  
Ficta pedum pono pressis vestigia signis (iii. 3-4)

(And in thy traces I now plant my own footsteps firmly fixed).

Since he never sware,  
Except his wrath were wreak'd on wretched man,  
That he would only shine among the dead  
Hereafter ; tales ! for never yet on earth  
Could dead flesh creep, or bits of roasting ox  
Moan round the spit :

The references are to *Odyssey*, xii. 383 *sqq.* and *id.* 394-6.

And here he glances on an eye new-born,  
And gets for greeting but a wail of pain :

Miscetur funere vagor  
Quem pueri tollunt visentes luminis oras  
(lib. ii. 576-7)

(With the funeral wail is blended the cry which young children raise when they enter the borders of light).

Cf. too *King Lear*, act iv. scene 6 :—

When we are born we cry that we are come  
To this great stage of fools.

Not thankful that his troubles are no more :

The allusion is to lib. iii. 900-905.

Or lend an ear to Plato where he says,  
That men like soldiers may not quit the post  
Allotted by the Gods :

Plato, *Phædo*, vi. :—

ώς ἐν τινι φρουρᾷ ἐτμὲν οἱ ἀνθρωποι καὶ οὐ δεῖ δὴ ἑαυτὸν ἐκ ταύτης  
λύειν οὐδ' ἀποδιδράσκειν

(We men are as it were on guard, and a man ought not, indeed, either to free himself from it nor ought he to run away),

though *φρουρά* is here generally taken as meaning a prison.<sup>1</sup> Cf. with this passage Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, I. ix. 41. :—

The term of life is limited,  
Ne may a man prolong, nor shorten it ;  
The soldier may not move from watchful sted  
Nor leave his stand untill his captaine bed.

The lines—

How should the mind, except it loved them, clasp  
These *idols* to herself?—

contain with the passage that follows an allusion to the images or emanations which, according to Lucretius, matter is always throwing off. The proper commentary on the passage is nearly the whole of the fourth book of the original.

<sup>1</sup> So Professor Jowett takes it (*Translation of Plato*, vol. i. p. 434); but, with due deference to so great an authority, I cannot but think that Tennyson's interpretation is the correct one. Plato seems to be alluding to a saying of Pythagoras to which Cicero refers, *De Senectute*, sect. 73, 'Vetatque Pythagoras injussu imperatoris, id est Dei, de praesidio et statione vitae decedere.' See too *Tusc. Disp.* i. 74. And Plato's own expression τοῦ δὲ θεοῦ τάττοντος, *Apology*, xxviii., may certainly be cited in corroboration. It is difficult to see the propriety of the word ἀποδιδράσκειν if the word *φρουρά* means a prison.

But who was he that in the garden snared  
Picus and Faunus, rustic Gods ?

This is a singular illustration of the various learning which Tennyson so often displays. The allusion is plainly to Ovid's *Fasti*, iii. 291-328, where Egeria instructs Numa to ensnare Picus and Faunus, that they may show him how the thunderbolts of Jupiter may be averted.

And here an Oread—how the sun delights  
To glance and shift about her *slippery* sides :

It is impossible not to notice here the felicity with which the poet, in adopting, has interpreted a singular epithet in Horace. The line 'Vultus *nimium lubricus* aspici' (*Odes*, I. xix. 8) has been interpreted by many generations of commentators as a face too *dangerous* to be gazed upon. But there is surely no reason why the epithet should not be explained as meaning a face voluptuously symmetrical, a face over which the eyes slip and wander, as it were, because in its rounded smoothness they find no particular feature on which to pause. Dante, it may be noticed, uses a similar expression, but with reference to dazzling (*Purg.* viii. 34-5) :—

Ben discerneva in lor la testa bionda,  
Ma *nelle facce l' occhio si smarria*

(Quite clearly did I discern in them the fair head, but in their faces the eye *wandered about* [or went astray]).<sup>1</sup>

Tennyson's lines enable us to understand the force and propriety of the expression. A poet is, after all, the best commentator on a poet.

A satyr, a satyr, see,  
Follows ; but him I proved impossible :

<sup>1</sup> This may be fanciful ; perhaps the word only means 'was bewildered' or 'got lost,' like 'smarrito volto,' *Purg.* xix. 14.

See lib. ii. 700 *sqq.* for the proof alluded to.

No larger feast than under plane or pine, &c.:

Almost a translation of lib. ii. 29–33.

Heliconian honey in living words:

An allusion to the beautiful passage lib. i. 934 *sqq.*

These *blind beginnings*:

The

*primordia cæca* (i. 110–3).

For the whole of this passage see ii. 999–1032 quoted above, and ii. 872–885, and *id.* 1048–1066.

The very sides of the grave itself shall pass,  
Vanishing:

Denique non monimenta virum delapsa videmus? (v. 311)

(Then, too, do we not see the monuments of men crumbling to pieces?)

A touch in the description of the suicide of Lucretius was evidently suggested by Virgil's description of the suicide of Dido:—

*Thus—thus*: the soul flies out and dies in the air:

*Sic, sic, juvat ire sub umbras* (*Æn.* iv. 660)—

the repetition of the 'thus' and the 'sic' marking the infliction of the successive stabs.

## CHAPTER VI

## GROUP V.—THE PRINCESS, ETC.

THE suggestion of the idea of *The Princess* may have come from Johnson's *Rasselas*, chap. xlix. :—

The Princess thought that of all sublunary things knowledge was the best: she desired first to learn all sciences, and then purposed to found a college of learned women in which she would preside.

It may have been suggested as a sort of reversed counterpart to Shakespeare's *Love's Labour's Lost*, or as an allegory corresponding to Spenser's Artegal and Radigund, *Faerie Queene*, bk. v. cantos iv.—vi. In any case it should be carefully compared with the latter, as the moral and the teaching are identical; both being refutations of the theory advanced in the fifth book of Plato's *Republic*. As might be expected in a work so exquisitely elaborated in point of style, we find an unusual number of reminiscences and adaptations.

## SECTION I

And *cook'd his spleen*:

This is an Homeric phrase :—

ἐπὶ τησὶ χόλον θυμαλγέα πέσσει (*Il.* iv. 513)

(At the ships he cooks his heart-grieving spleen).

Cf., too, *Iliad*, i. 81, and Aristotle, *Ethics*, IV. v. 10 :—

έν αὐτῷ δὲ πέψαι τὴν ὀργὴν χρόνου δεῖ

(To digest internally one's wrath takes time).

The lines—

A wind arose and rush'd upon the South,  
And shook the songs, the whispers, and the shrieks  
Of the wild woods together ; and a Voice  
Went with it, ' Follow, follow, thou shalt win '—

are like an echo of Shelley's lines—

A wind arose among the pines and shook  
The clinging music from their boughs, and then  
Low, sweet, faint sounds like the farewell of ghosts  
Were heard, ' O follow, follow, follow me ! '

*(Prometheus Unbound*, ii. 1).

So, too, the lines—

But bland the smile that like a wrinkling wind  
On glassy water drove his cheek in lines—

appear to be a reminiscence of

O'er the visage wan  
Of Athanase, a ruffling atmosphere  
Of dark emotion, a swift shadow ran  
Like wind upon some forest-bosom'd lake,  
Glassy and dark.

The simile—

As when a field of corn  
Bows all its ears before the roaring East—

is, with the substitution of East for West, from Homer,  
*Il.* ii. 147-8 :—

ώς δ' ὅτε κυήσῃ Ζέφυρος βαθὺ λιγῖον, ἐλθὼν  
λάβρος, ἐπαιγίζων, ἐπὶ τ' ἵμνει ἀσταχνεσσιν

(As when the west-wind tosses a deep cornfield, rushing  
down with furious blast, and it bows with all its ears).

The beauty of this simile had struck Milton, who has  
also borrowed it (*Par. Lost*, iv. 980-1).

## SECTION II

In shining draperies, *headed like a star*,  
Her maiden babe :

So Homer of Astyanax :—

‘Εκτορίδην ἀγαπητὸν ἀλίγκιον ἀστέρι καλῷ  
(Hector's loved son, like unto a beautiful star).

It is worth noticing that the only beauty in Hobbes's translation of the *Iliad* is his version of this passage :—

And, like a star, upon her bosom lay  
His beautiful and shining golden head.

The Lady Psyche's lecture reminds us of the discourse of the learned lady in Prior's *Alma* :—

This world was once, &c.  
. . . . . then the monster, then the man.  
. . . . . Thereupon she took  
A bird's-eye-view of all the ungracious past,  
Glanced at the legendary Amazon, . . .  
Appraised the Lycian custom, . . .  
Ran down the Persian, Grecian, Roman lines  
Of empire, . . . . .  
. . . . . till warming with her theme  
She fulminated out her scorn of laws Salique  
And little-footed China, touch'd on Mahomet  
With much contempt, and came to chivalry.

Now let us listen to Prior's learned dame :—

She kindly talk'd at least three hours  
Of plastic forms and mental powers,  
Described our pre-existing station  
Before this vile terrene creation,  
And, lest I should be wearied, madam,  
To cut things short, came down to Adam.

From whence, as fast as she was able,  
 She drowns the world, and builds up Babel.  
 Through Syria, Persia, Greece she goes,  
 And takes the Romans in the close

(*Alma*, canto i. 891).

The Lady Psyche has the advantage of having a particular purpose in view, but Prior's satire is as fine as Tennyson's, and much less wearisome than Tennyson's strained artificiality.

The ingenious simile in which the sudden collapse of a speaker is compared to the sudden collapse of a sail—

till as when a boat  
 Tacks, and the slacken'd sail flaps, &c.—

may be compared to an image something similar in Dante :—

Quali dal vento le gonfiate vele  
 Caggiono avvolte, poichè l' alber fiacca

(*Inferno*, canto vii. 13-14)

(As sails swelled by the wind fall entangled when the mast gives way).

The incident of the wounded stag—

In gentler days, your arrow-wounded fawn  
 Came flying while you sat, &c.—

seems to be a reminiscence of Silvia's wounded stag in the beautiful passage in Virgil's seventh *Aeneid*, 483-504.

### SECTION III

In the song with its burden—

Sleep, my little one, sleep, my pretty one, sleep—

we have, of course, a reminiscence of Alcmena's lullaby in Theocritus, xxiv. 7-9 :—

εῦδετ' ἐμὰ βρέφεα γλυκερὸν καὶ ἐγέρσιμον ὑπνον,  
εῦδετ' ἐμὰ ψυχά, &c.

(Sleep, my little ones, a sweet and lightsome sleep. Sleep, soul of mine).

Morn in the white wake, &c.:

See illustration in note on *Love and Duty*.

The *thick-leaved platans*:

Cf. Moschus, *Idyll* v.:-

ὑπὸ πλατάνῳ βαθυφύλλῳ

(Under the thick-leaved plane).

Our weakness somehow shakes *the shadow, Time*:

The expression is from Wordsworth—

Death, the skeleton,

And *Time, the shadow (Yew Trees)*.

Consonant chords that shiver to one note:

Cf. Izaak Walton's *Life of Donne*:-

It is most certain that two lutes, being both strung and tuned to an equal pitch, and then one being played upon, the other that is not touched, being laid upon a table at a fit distance, will, like an echo to a trumpet, warble a faint, audible harmony in answer to the same tune.

The crane, I said, may chatter of the crane,  
The dove may murmur of the dove, but I,  
An eagle, clang an eagle to the sphere:

An obvious imitation of Theocritus, *Idyll* ix. 31:-

τέττιξ μὲν τέττιγι φῖλος, μύρμικι δὲ μύρμιξ,  
ἱηκες δ' ἵηξιν ἐμὶν δ' ἀ Μῶσα καὶ φδά

(Cicala is dear to cicala, and ant to ant, and hawks to hawks, but to me the Muse and song).

Cf., too, *id.*, *Idyll* x. 30-31; and Virgil, *Eclog.* ii, 63-64.

She speaks  
A Memnon smitten with the morning sun :

The allusion is to Pausanias, lib. i. 42, *ad med.*

Settled in her eyes  
The green malignant light of coming storm :

Nothing could form a better commentary than this on the real meaning of Homer's *γλαυκιόων* as applied to an angry lion :—

*γλαυκιόων δ' ιθὺς φέρεται μένει* (*Iliad*, xx. 172),

and the Pseudo-Hesiod's—

*γλαυκιόων δ' ὄσσοις δεινόν* (*Scutum Achillis*, 430),

also of an angry lion ; and possibly of Pindar's

*γλαυκοὶ δράκοντες* (*Olymp.* viii. 49) ;

and so, too, Oppian, *Cynegetica*, iii. 70, of the eyes of the pard. In all these passages the word *γλαυκός* has not, I submit, its ordinary meaning of simply 'gleaming' or 'flashing' as of the sea, or of 'blue' or 'grey,' or 'blue-grey,' nor has it any connection with its ordinary application to the eyes of Pallas Athene ; it is the peculiar whity green glint flashing from the eye of an enraged animal—lion, tiger, cat, or pard—and Tennyson exactly expresses its meaning. For the precise shade of colour see Nonnus, *Dionys.* v. 178, who applies it to the *green gleam* of the smaragdus or emerald :—

*γλαυκῆς δὲ λίθος χλοάουσα μαρύγδου.*

#### SECTION IV

The casement slowly grows a glimmering square :

Cf. Leigh Hunt, *Hero and Leander*, canto ii. *ad fin.*—

And when the casement at the dawn of light  
Began to show a square of ghastly white.

The line—

Dear as remember'd kisses after death—

is obviously suggested by Moschus, *Idyll* iii. 69–70.

Stared with great eyes and *laugh'd with alien lips*  
is literally, of course, from *Odyssey*, xx. 347 :—

*οἱ δὲ ἥδη γναθμοῖσι γελώντων ἀλλοτρίοισι.*

Horace has forestalled Tennyson in borrowing the same phrase, *Sat. II. iii. 72.*

And play the slave to gain the tyranny :

So Tacitus of Otho :—

Omnia serviliter pro dominatione (*Hist. i. ch. 36*)

(Doing all things like a slave for the sake of dominion).

He has a solid base of temperament,  
But as the *water-lily starts and slides*  
*Upon the level in little puffs of wind*  
*Though anchor'd to the bottom—such is he :*

This felicitous and picturesque simile is one of Tennyson's many debts to Wordsworth :—

A thing  
Subject . . . to vital accidents ;  
And, *like the water-lily, lives and thrives,*  
*Whose root is fix'd in stable earth, whose head*  
*Floats on the tossing waters* (*Excursion v. ad med.*).

*Whose brains are in their hands and in their heels :*

This very vigorous expression is from Longinus, or from the author of the *De Haloneso*, from whom Longinus apparently quotes it :—

*εἰ μὴ τὸν ἐγκέφαλον ἐν ταῖς πτέρναις καταπεπατημένον φορεῖτε*  
(*De Sub. xxxviii.*)

(Unless you carry your brains next to the ground in your heels).

The words of the author of the *De Haloneso* are—

εἴπερ ὑμεῖς τὸν ἔγκεφαλον ἐν τοῖς κροτάφοις, καὶ μὴ ἐν ταῖς πτέρναις καταπεπατημένον φορεῖτε (*De Hal.*)

(If you have a brain in your temples and not next to the ground in your heels).

It was probably a proverb, and Libanius (*Arg. ad Orat.*) censures it for its silliness (*εὐηθέσ τι νομίζεται*) ; and as an illustration of this it was probably cited by Longinus.

#### SECTION V

Their morions, *wash'd with morning* :

A beautiful expression in which Tennyson had been anticipated by Browning, who describes Florence as—

*Washed by the morning water-gold* (*Old Pictures at Florence*).

The fine simile in which Ida's unshaken firmness is compared to a pine vexed and tried by storm was evidently suggested by the simile in which Virgil compares Æneas under similar circumstances to an oak (*Æn.* ii. 441 *sqq.*).

As comes a pillar of electric cloud :

With this graphic description of the progress of a thunderbolt compare Lucan's equally graphic description of the same thing, *Pharsalia*, i. 152–158.

#### SECTION VI

In the song 'Home they brought her warrior dead,' which opens this section, we have a very interesting illustration of the skill with which Tennyson

transmutes into his own precious metal the less refined ore of other poets. It is just possible that the suggestion for this song came from Thorpe's version of the *First Lay of Gudrún*, prepared for the press in 1856, but not published till 1866. In this lay it is told how Gudrún sat over the corpse of Sigurd, bursting with sorrow but unable to weep.

No sigh she uttered, nor with her hands beat, nor wailed as other women. Jarls came forward of great sagacity, from her sad state of mind to divert her. Gudrún could not shed a tear. Sat there noble wives of jarls, adorned with gold, before Gudrún; each of them told her sorrows, the bitterest she had known. . . . But Gudrún could not shed a tear, such was her affliction for her dead consort. . . . Then said Gullrönd, Giuki's daughter, 'Little canst thou, my fosterer, wise as thou art, with a young wife fittingly talk.' The king's body she forbade to be longer hidden. She snatched the sheet from Sigurd's corse, and turned his cheek towards his wife's knees. 'Behold thy loved one, lay thy mouth to his lip as if thou wouldst embrace the living prince.' Gudrún upon him cast one look. . . . And a flood of tears fell to her knees (THORPE'S *Edda of Sæmund the Learned*, pp. 89-91).

It will be seen that Tennyson has altered the legend: what in his version brings tears to Gudrún is not the sight of her lord's dead face, but the sight of her child. For this suggestion he seems to have been indebted to Sir Walter Scott. Compare the following passage from *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* (canto i. stanza 9):—

O'er her warrior's bloody bier  
The ladye dropp'd nor flower nor tear,  
Until, amid her sorrowing clan,  
Her son lisp'd from the nurse's knee

\* \* \* \* \*

Then fast the mother's tears did seek  
To dew the infant's kindling cheek.

Curiously enough, the climax of the piece—the sudden and passionate resolve on the part of the bereaved parent to live for the child—closely resembles a passage in Darwin's once celebrated episode of *Eliza* in the *Botanic Garden*. There the mother has been slain in war, and the young husband, distracted with grief, has abandoned himself to despair; but on his two little children being presented to his sight, exclaims, like Tennyson's heroine—

These bind to earth—for these I pray to live  
~ (*Loves of the Plants*, canto iii. 269-326).

#### SECTION VII

The magnificent simile—

As one that climbs a peak to gaze  
O'er land and main, and sees a great black cloud  
Drag inward from the deeps, a wall of night  
Blot out the slope of sea from verge to shore,

And quenching lake by lake, and tarn by tarn  
Expunge the world—

is taken literally from *Iliad*, iv. 275 :—

ώς δ' ὅτ' ἀπὸ σκοπῆς εἰδε νέφος αἰπόλος ἀνέρ,  
ἐρχόμενον κατὰ πόντον ὑπὸ Ζεφύροιο ἰωῆς,  
τῷ δέ τι ἀνευθεν ἐύντι, μελάντερον, ἡύτε πίσσα,  
φαίνετ' ἀνά κατὰ πόντον, ἕγει δέ τε λαῖλαπα πολλήν

(As when a goatherd from some hill peak sees a cloud coming across the deep with the blast of the West wind behind it; and to him, being as he is afar, it seems blacker, even as pitch, as it goes along the deep, bringing a great whirlwind).

Compare, too, Lucretius (vi. 256 *sqq.*), who has imi-

tated the same simile ; it is curious that Monro should not have noticed this. The passage beginning—

Come down, O maid, from yonder mountain height—

is a splendid illustration of Tennyson's method. Taking the framework from Theocritus, he wreathes round, beneath, and over it such a wealth of original ornament that it is barely discernible ; but barely discernible it supports the work. The passage on which this 'small sweet Idyl' is modelled is the Cyclops' invocation to Galatea (*Idyll xi.* 20-79) ; but in the details one touch only has been directly imitated from the original :—

Leave

The monstrous ledges there to slope :

*τὰν γλαυκὰν δὲ θάλασσαν ἔα ποτὶ χέρσον ὀρεχθεῖν* (l. 43)

(Leave the blue sea to roll against the land).

But it is the *note* of Theocritus, not of this idyll alone, but of *Id.* iii., of the song of Battus in *Id.* x., just as the repetition of 'sweet' is precisely the

*ἀδεῖ' ἀ φωνὰ τᾶς πόρτιος, ἀδὺ τὸ πνεῦμα·  
ἀδὺ δὲ χῶ μόσχος γαρύεται, &c.* (*Idyll viii.*)

(Sweet is the voice of the heifer, sweet her breath, sweet, too, the voice of the calf).

The *moan of doves* in immemorial *elms*  
is Virgil's

*Nec gemere aeria cessabit turtur ab ulmo*  
(*Ecl. i.* 58).

The whole passage is a marvellous illustration of Tennyson's power of catching and rendering in English the charm of the best and sweetest Greek pastoral poetry—of preserving the very *bouquet*—

as having clasp'd a rose  
 Within the palm, the rose being ta'en away  
 The hand retains a little breath of sweet,  
 Holding a full perfume of his sweet guest.

In the miscellaneous poems which follow *The Princess* there are not many reminiscences and parallels. The vigorous phrase in *The Third of February*—

to *dodge and palter* with a public crime—

is Shakespeare's

*Dodge*  
*And palter* in the shifts of baseness  
*(Antony and Cleopatra, act iii. sc. 9).*

In the *Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington* it is impossible not to feel that the poet owes something to the fine panegyrics of Claudian—particularly the *De Laudibus Stilichonis*. There is one curious coincidence in this poem with a passage about *Stilicho* in Claudian's *De Bello Getico* :—

O good gray head which all men knew :

Sideris instar  
 Emicuit Stilichonis apex, et cognita fulsit  
*Canities (De Bello Get. 458-60).*

The beautiful expression 'apple-cheek'd' in *The Islet*—

A bevy of roses *apple-cheek'd*—

is from Theocritus—

χ' ἀ μαλοπάρησος Ἀγαύα (*Idyll xxvii.*)

(And apple-cheeked Agave);

and the lines—

For Saxon or Dane or Norman we,  
 Teuton or Celt, or whatever we be,  
 We are each all Dane in our welcome of thee—

recall the exquisite adulation of Martial enumerating the various nations which welcome Cæsar home:—

Vox diversa sonat populorum, est vox tamen una  
 Cum verus patriæ diceris esse pater  
 (*De Spectaculis*, epig. iii.).

The exquisitely felicitous expression in *The Daisy*—

By bays, the peacock's neck in hue—

if not suggested by Southey's lines in *Madoc*, finds in them an excellent illustrative commentary:—

One glowing green expanse  
 Save where along the bending line of shore  
*Such hue is thrown, as when the peacock's neck*  
*Assumes its proudest tint of amethyst*  
*Embathed in emerald glory* (*Madoc in Wales*, xiii.).

The rich Virgilian rustic measure  
 Of Lari Maxume :

An allusion, of course, to *Georgics* (lib. ii. 159 *sqq.*).

In the two magnificent stanzas entitled *Will* we are strongly reminded both of Horace and Virgil, as well as of Daniel.

For him nor moves the loud world's random mock,  
 Nor all Calamity's hugest waves, &c.,

were plainly suggested by the famous lines which begin the third ode of the third book of Horace's *Odes*, and perhaps owe something to the grand poem of Daniel, addressed to the Countess of Cumberland. The verses which follow—

Who seems a promontory of rock,  
 That, compass'd round with turbulent sound  
 In middle ocean meets the surging shock  
 Tempest-buffeted—

are obviously imitated from Virgil (*AEn.* x. 693) :—

Ille velut rupes vastum quæ prodit in æquor  
 Obvia ventorum furii, expostaque ponto  
 Vim cunctam atque minas perfert coelique marisque  
 Ipsa immota manens

(He like a rock which juts out into the mighty deep, exposed to the rage of the wind and braving the sea, bears all the violence and menace of heaven and ocean, itself all unmoved).

See, too, the parent simile (*Iliad*, xv. 618 *sqq.*).

The idea in the little poem (a metaphysical platitude) —

Flower in the crannied wall,  
 . . . . . if I could understand  
 What you are, root and all, and all in all,  
 I should know what God and man is —

is expressed by Donne (*Sermons*, Alford edit. vol. iv. p. 61) :—

Every worm in the grave, lower, every weed upon the grave is *an abridgment of all*.

But the best commentary is Plotinus (*Ennead.* III. ii. 1) :—

τὸ μέρος παρέχεται ὅλον, καὶ πᾶν αὐτῷ φίλον· οὐ χωρισθὲν ἄλλο ἀπ' ἄλλου, οὐδὲ ἔτερον γεγενημένον μόνον καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἀπεξενωμένον

(A part exhibits the whole and the whole is friendly to itself, not separated one part from the other nor become another alone and estranged from others).

## CHAPTER VII

## GROUP VI.—IN MEMORIAM

WITH the exception of Gray's poems there is probably no poem in our language so loaded with reminiscences so skilfully and exquisitely assimilated as *In Memoriam*. If ever there was a poet who might say with Horace—

Ego apis Matinæ  
More modoque  
Grata carpentis thyma per laborem  
Plurimum . . . operosa . . .  
Carmina fingo

(Like the bee of Matina feeding with endless toil on the sweet thyme, what I compose I compose with elaborate care)—

it would surely be the poet of *In Memoriam*.

In illustrating this work it may be well to comment first on the general scheme of the whole composition, secondly on the versification, and thirdly to illustrate it in detail. The general scheme of the work appears to have been suggested by the series of sonnets and canzoni dedicated by Petrarch to the memory of Laura de Sade. Tennyson, it is true, strikes deeper chords, and embraces a far wider range of subjects than Petrarch; his themes and his treatment alike are at once more subtle, more profound, and

more complex. But the main lines on which his work runs are the lines on which Petrarch's sonnets and canzoni run. In ninety-eight short poems the Italian poet reiterates, now in tones of tempered grief, now of rapturous gratitude or pensive grateful retrospect, the truth so well put by his English pupil—

"Tis better to have loved and lost  
Than never to have loved at all.

He tells how his earthly love for an earthly object, fertile with temporal blessings though it was, has by death become transformed and purified. The poems composing *In Memoriam* appear to fall into four cycles—the first extending from Section i. to Section xxx.; the second from xxxi. to lxxviii.; the third from lxxix. to cv.; and the fourth from cvi. to the end. In the first the note is simple elegy, the expression of grief and the sense of loss, and has its direct counterpart in Petrarch. The poems in the second cycle are occupied for the most part in speculations on the solemn and awful problems which death and life, the Creator and the world, present and suggest to a thoughtful man of the present day. Of this there is nothing in Petrarch, who, being a devout Catholic, sees all clear in the light of Revelation. The poems in the third cycle, for the most part lyric expressions of personal feeling, records of happy memories of the dead friend, and of the consciousness of his spiritual presence, have their exact counterpart in Petrarch. In the fourth cycle there is much of course which has nothing corresponding in the sonnetti and canzoni, but there is much also which does correspond, as in such sections as cxv., cxvi.,

cxxi., cxxx., which are purely Petrarchian. But the similarity really consists in the identity of the central truth, that in Love's hands are the keys of Paradise. The object of Petrarch's affection and sorrow, etherealised by death, becomes identified with the Madonna, and the canzone to her who

Di sol vestita,  
Coronata di stelle, al sommo Sole  
Piacesti sì che 'n te sua luce ascole

closes the poems. So with the work of Tennyson it opens with mere threnody, it closes with the vision of

That God, which ever lives and loves,  
One God, one law, one element,  
And one far-off divine event,  
To which the whole creation moves.

The influence of Petrarch indeed suffuses the whole poem as it suffuses the *Elegy of Gray*.

Much has been written about the peculiar stanza form employed in *In Memoriam*, and it has usually been stated that the scheme of its metre was borrowed from Ben Jonson, *Underwoods*, xxxix., or *Catiline*, chorus in act xx. I am not aware whether any poet in our language prior to Ben Jonson has employed this stanza in octosyllabics, but it was certainly not Jonson's invention, as it is commonly employed by the French poets of the fifteenth century, and Puttenham (1589) includes it in his scheme of metres, *Art of English Poesie* (edit. Arber), pp. 99 and 101. However this may be, it must be obvious to any one who has any ear that the rough and jolting verses of Jonson, so singularly deficient in rhythm and cadence, supposing they did suggest the stanza, could have suggested nothing but the bald outline, Jonson's rhythm holds about the same relation

to the matchless mechanism of Tennyson's stanza, as the hexameters of the *Iliad* hold to the hexameters of *The Courtship of Miles Standish*. It is not unlikely that the peculiarly beautiful cæsura effect and fall of cadence, which characterise Tennyson's measure, are to be numbered among his many debts to Wordsworth—see *The Affliction of Margaret*. This poem, though not in the quatrain employed by Tennyson, has exactly the same cadence and the same peculiar rhythmic effect. Take for example these verses :—

Alas ! the fowls of heaven have wings,  
And blasts from heaven will aid their flight.

Again :—

My apprehensions come in crowds,  
I dread the rustling of the grass,  
The very shadows of the clouds  
Have power to shake me as they pass.

But it seems probable that the measure, the hint of the cadence, and indeed the whole cast of the metre, have been taken from a very rare volume,<sup>1</sup> scarcely known even to professed students of our early poetry—the occasional verses of Lord Herbert of Cherbury, the brother of George Herbert. Some of Herbert's stanzas are so similar to *In Memoriam*, that even a nice ear might excusably mistake one or two of them for the Laureate's. They occur in a piece entitled *An Ode upon the Question, whether Love should continue for ever* :—

Oh ! no, beloved, I am most sure  
These virtuous habits we acquire,  
As being with the soul entire,  
Must with it evermore endure.

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<sup>1</sup> These poems have been edited by the present writer for Messrs. Chatto & Windus.

Else should our souls in vain elect,  
 And vainer yet were Heaven's laws,  
 When to an everlasting cause  
 They give a perishing effect.

Not here on earth, then, nor above,  
 Our good affections can impair ;  
 For where God doth admit the fair,  
 Think you that He excludeth love ?

These eyes again thine eyes shall see,  
 These hands again thine hands enfold,  
 And all chaste blessings can be told  
 Shall with us everlasting be.

For if no use of sense remain  
 When bodies once this life forsake,  
 Or they could no delight partake,  
 Why should they ever rise again ?

Let then no doubt, Celinda, touch,  
 Much less your fairest mind invade ;  
 Were not our souls immortal made,  
 Our equal loves can make them such.

In illustrating *In Memoriam* in detail, it may be well to group the sections according to the cycles indicated above.

#### CYCLE I.: PROLOGUE TO XXX

The noble verses which open *In Memoriam* are obviously a transfusion, so to speak, of some verses of Lord Herbert's brother, George Herbert, who appears to be a favourite with the Laureate. A comparison of Herbert's first stanza with the opening of Tennyson's poem will at once illustrate the fine art of the latter poet and the peculiar manner in which he has, more or less unconsciously no doubt, availed himself of his predecessor's poem.

Strong Son of God, Immortal Love,

Thine are these orbs of light and shade ;

Thou madest life in man and brute ;

Thou madest Death ; and lo, thy foot

Is on the skull which thou hast made :

Immortal Love, Author of this great frame,

Sprung from that beauty which can never fade,

How hath man parcell'd out Thy glorious name,

And thrown it on the dust which Thou hast made

(HERBERT Love) ;

Whether I fly with angels, fall with dust,

Thy hands made both, and I am there.

(Id., *The Temper*, 26, 27).

And thou hast made him : thou art just (*In Mem.*) :

And God has promised : He is just (HERBERT, *The Discharge*).

Our little systems have their day,

And Thou, O Lord, art more than they (*In Mem.*) :

Lord, though we change, Thou art the same

(HERBERT, *Whit-Sunday*).

The lines, applying to Love—

Whom we, that have not seen thy face,

By faith, and faith alone, embrace,

Believing where we cannot prove—

recall Byron :—

O Love, no habitant of earth thou art,

An *unseen* seraph, we *believe* in thee

(*Childe Harold*, canto iv. st. cxxi.).

That mind and soul according well  
May make one music :

That so thy favours granting my request,

They and my mind may chime (HERBERT, *Denial*).

Our wills are ours, we know not how;  
 Our wills are ours, to make them thine:

The best commentary on this is the whole of the third canto of Dante's *Paradiso*.

*Confusions* of a wasted youth:

This curious use of the word has been anticipated by Vaughan the Silurist:—

These dark *confusions* that within me nest (*Dressing*).

Him who sings  
 To one clear harp in divers tones:

The poet alluded to is Goethe,<sup>1</sup> though there is no reference to any particular passage, but to his general teaching. But compare St. Augustine:—

De vitiis nostris scalam nobis facimus si vitia ipsa calcamus (Serm. clxxvi. in edit. Migne, tom. xxxviii. p. 2082).

Cf., too, Longfellow's well-known poem *The Ladder of St. Augustine*.

O, not for thee, the glow, the bloom,  
 Who changest not in any gale (ii.)

of the yew tree; cf. Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* lib. xvi. c. 40:—

Non enim omnes florent et sunt tristes quædam, *quæque non sentiunt gaudia annorum*

<sup>1</sup> Lord Tennyson, in a letter addressed to a Mr. Baron in July 1880, and published by that gentleman in the *Christian World*, August 17, 1882, writes: 'As far as I can recollect, I referred to Goethe.' The compiler of this volume has been informed by friends who have the honour of knowing Lord Tennyson, that he is in the habit of giving the same reply to those who ask him to explain the reference.

(For they do not all bear flowers, and some are sombre, and such as have no experience of the joys of the years).

But perhaps 'gaudia annorum' mean only flowers.

A use in measured language lies ;  
The sad mechanic exercise,  
Like dull narcotics, numbing pain (v.) :

Cf. Donne, *Triple Fool* :—

I thought if I could draw my pains  
Through rhyme's vexation I should them allay,  
Grief brought to numbers cannot be so fierce.

One writes, that 'Other friends remain,'  
That 'Loss is common to the race.'

That loss is common would not make  
My own less bitter (vi.) :

The allusion is to *Hamlet*, act i. scene 2, and how admirably has Tennyson expressed in this poem all that Hamlet implied without expressing :—

*Queen.* Thou know'st 'tis common ; all that live must die,  
Passing through nature to eternity.

*Hamlet.* Ay, madam, it is common.

Never morning wore  
To evening, but some heart did break (*id.*) :

Nec nox ulla diem neque noctem aurora secuta est  
Quæ non audierit mixtos vagitibus ægri  
Ploratus (*Lucretius*, ii. 578–80)

(Nor did any night ever follow day nor morning night that heard not wailings mingled with the sickly infant's cries).

Drops in his *vast and wandering* grave (*id.*) :

To seek the empty *vast and wandering* air  
(SHAKESPEARE, *Rich. III.* act i. sc. 3).

With Section viii. may be compared Crabbe's *Lover's Journey*, and the magnificent lines in Young's *Night Thoughts*, i. :—

The disenchanted earth

Lost all her lustre. Where her glittering towers,  
Her golden mountains where?—All darken'd down  
To naked waste, a dreary vale of tears.

*The great magician's dead.*

With Section ix. should be compared Horace, *Ode* iii. lib. i., and Theocritus, *Idyll* viii. 53 *sqq.*, which plainly inspired it.

The fine epithet applied to a cloud, that

onward drags a *labouring* breast (xv.)

has been anticipated by Marlowe (*Dr. Faustus, ad finem*) :—

Into the entrails of yon *labouring* cloud.

In xvi. the lines about the unhappy bark—

That strikes by night a craggy shelf  
And staggers blindly ere she sink—

find an interesting illustration in Napier's description of the Battle of Albuera, *Hist. of the Pen. War*, Book xii. :—

The Fusileer battalions struck by the iron tempest *reeled* and *staggered like sinking ships*.

In xvii. again may be traced the inspiration of Theocritus, Horace, and perhaps Petrarch.

And from his ashes may be made  
The violet of his native land (xviii.) :

Cf. Persius, *Sat.* i. 39 :—

Nunc non e tumulo fortunatâque favillâ  
Nascentur violæ;

and Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, v. 1 :—

And from her fair and unpolluted flesh  
May violets spring.

My lighter moods are like to these,

But there are other griefs within (xx.)

(and cf., too, Section xlix.): apparently suggested by Shakespeare:—

My grief lies all within,  
And these external manners of lament  
Are merely shadows to the unseen grief  
That swells with silence in the tortured soul

(*Rich. II.*).

Section xxii. has an exact counterpart in Petrarch's forty-seventh sonnet (*In Morte*).

The Shadow cloak'd from head to foot,  
Who keeps the keys of all the creeds (xxiii.):

Cf. Milton, *Par. Lost*, ii. 665 *sqq.* for a commentary on the first line, and Pope's—

Wait the Great Teacher Death (*Essay on Man*, Epist. i. 92)

for an illustration of the second. But it is the repetition of an idea which Sir Thomas Browne has in his *Religio Medici* thrown into many forms.

And Thought leapt out to wed with Thought  
Ere Thought could wed itself with Speech (*ib.*):

More simply Pope:—

When thought meets thought ere from the lips it part  
(*Eloisa to Abelard*).

No lapse of moons can canker Love,  
Whatever fickle tongues may say (xxvi.):

Love's not Time's fool (SHAKESPEARE, *Sonnet cxvi.*).

'Tis better to have loved and lost  
Than never to have loved at all (xxvii.):

Of the many illustrations of this sentiment let two suffice:—

'Tis better to have been left than never to have been loved  
(CONGREVE, *Way of the World*, ii. 2);

and Thackeray, *Pendennis*, vol. i. ch. vi. :—

It is best to love wisely, no doubt, but to love foolishly is better than not to be able to love at all.

#### CYCLE II.: XXXI.—LXXVIII

An admirable commentary on the teaching embodied in Section xxxiii. will be found in Bishop Butler's *Durham Charge*, in which he points out the necessity of 'the keeping up as well as we are able the form and face of religion with decency and reverence. The form of religion may, indeed, be where there is little of the thing itself, but the thing itself cannot be preserved among mankind without the form.'

The moanings of the homeless sea (xxxv.):

This beautiful line is partly from Horace, *Odes*, II. xx.—

Visam *gementis* littora Bospori

(I shall go to see the shores of the moaning Bosporus),

and partly from Shelley—

The thunder and the hiss  
Of *homeless streams* (*Alastor*).

The sound of that *forgetful* shore (xxxv.):

This unusual use of the word is found in Milton:—

The sleepy drench  
Of that forgetful lake (*Par. Lost*).

An excellent commentary on xxxvi. is found in Cranmer's words in his *Preface* to his Bible :—

For the Holy Ghost hath so ordered and attempered the Scriptures that in them as well publicans, fishers, shepherds, may find their edification as great doctors their erudition.

The very pretty expression—

Make April of her tender eyes (xl.)—

appears to have been suggested by Shakespeare :—

The April's in her eyes, it is love's spring,  
And these the showers to bring it on  
(*Antony and Cleopatra*, act iii. sc. 2).

In Section 1. it may be remarked that nothing could better illustrate the essential differences between the poetry of the post-Revolution time and that of the eighteenth century, than to compare these verses with Tickell's invocation to the spirit of Addison, *Elegy on the Death of Addison*; see the passage beginning 'Oh if sometimes thy spotless form descend.'

My words are only words, and moved  
Upon the topmost froth of thought (lii.):

From Persius—

Summâ delumbe salivâ  
Hoc natat in labris (*Sat. i. 104*)

(This emasculate stuff floats on the topmost froth of the lips).

The lines in Section liv.—

That nothing walks with aimless feet ;  
That not one life shall be destroy'd, &c.—

embody one of Wordsworth's great doctrines :—

'Tis Nature's law  
 That none the meanest of created things,  
 Or forms created the most vile and brute,  
 The dullest or most noxious, should exist  
 Divorced from good, a spirit and pulse of good,  
 A life and soul, to every mode of being  
 Inseparably link'd (*The Old Cumberland Beggar*).

And 'Ave, ave, ave,' said,  
 'Adieu, adieu' for evermore (lvii.) :

The funeral adjuration of the Romans—

Atque in perpetuum frater *ave* atque *vale* (*Catullus*, ci. 10)—  
 and so frequently in inscriptions ; see Orelli's collection  
*passim*. There is an expression in section lvi. which  
 deserves commentary :—

Dragons of the prime,  
 That tare each other *in their slime*.

This is, or might be, an excellent illustration of Tennyson's careful learning, though possibly the poet had no notion of the singular propriety of his expression. The 'slime' is the *προτέρη ἥλις*—Horace's 'princeps limus' (*Odes*, I. xvi. 13), the primeval mud out of which all things were formed at the beginning, when all was fluid and unconcocted. See Apollonius Rhodius, *Argon.* iv. 675 :—

τοίους καὶ προτέρης ἐξ ἥλιος ἐβλάστησεν  
 χθὼν αὐτή, . . . . .  
 οὕπω διψαλέω μάλ' ὑπ' ἡέρι πιληθεῖσα  
 οὐ δέ πω ἀζαλέοιο βολαῖς τόσον ἡελίοιο  
 ἵκμάδας αἰνυμένη

(Such creatures Earth herself produced out of the primeval mud, when as yet she was not made solid by the thirsty air, and had not as yet got moisture from the rays of the scorching sun).

Thy marble *bright in dark* appears (lxvii.):

Cf. Shakespeare, *Sonnet* xliiv.:-

Are darkly bright, are *bright in dark* directed.

Sleep, Death's twin-brother (lxviii.):

So *Iliad*, xiv.—

$\xi\nu\theta' \pi\pi\nu\varphi \sigma\mu\beta\lambda\eta\tau\omega \kappa\alpha\sigma\iota\gamma\nu\eta\tau\omega \Theta\alpha\nu\alpha\tau\omega$

(Where he met with Sleep, Death's brother);

so Virgil, *AEn.* vi. 278—

Leti consanguineus Sopor;

and Shelley—

Death and his brother, Sleep (*Queen Mab*, 2).

In shadowy thoroughfares of thought (lxx.)

was obviously suggested by that weird and pregnant line in Sophocles, *Œd. Tyr.* 67—

$\pi\o\lambda\lambda\omega\delta' \delta' \o\deltao\omega\delta \epsilon\lambda\theta\o\eta\tau\alpha \phi\ro\eta\tau\i\delta\omega\pi\lambda\alpha\omega\delta$

(Having traversed many paths in the wanderings of thought),

on which Shelley so admirably comments in a note quoted by Mrs. Shelley in her prefatory remarks on the *Prometheus Unbound*.

Death has made

His darkness beautiful with thee (lxxiv.):

Exactly Petrarch's—

Non può morte il dolce viso amaro;

Ma 'l dolce viso, dolce può far morte

(*Sonnet* lxxx.).

The *breeze of song* (lxxv.):

Pindar's phrase—

$o\bar{\nu}\rho\omega\bar{\nu}\mu\nu\omega\omega$  (*Pythian*, iv. 5)

(The breeze of songs).

With the whole of lxxvi. should be compared the magnificent passage in Dante's *Purgatorio*, 91-117, which plainly inspired this fine section as well as the third stanza, one of the grandest Tennyson ever wrote, in Section lxxiii. The opening words—

Take wings of fancy, and ascend—

are from Petrarch, *Sonnet lxxxii.* :—

Volo con l' ali de' pensieri al cielo.

A good commentary on

Where all the starry heavens of space  
Are sharpen'd to a needle's end

will be found in Shakespeare, *Cymbeline*, act i. scene 4 :—

till the diminution  
Of space had *pointed him as sharp as a needle.*

Section lxxviii. exactly answers in its general purport to Petrarch's twenty-fifth sonnet (*In Morte di Donna Laura*). Cf. especially

E certo ogni mio studio in quel temp' era  
Pur di sfogare il doloroso core  
In qualche modo, non d' acquistar fama.  
Pianger cercai, non già del pianto onore

(And certainly all my desire at that time was merely to ease in any way my troubled heart, not to win fame. I sought to weep, not at all the glory of weeping).

## CYCLE III.: LXXXI.-CV

Laburnums, *dropping-wells of fire* (lxxxiii.):

Cf. Cowper's simpler expression—

Laburnum rich  
*In streaming gold* (*Task*, vi. 149);

compare too a similarly vivid picture of the arbute in Calpurnius Siculus, a poet to whose exquisite touches of natural description no critic, so far as I know, has done justice:—

Ab isdem saepe cavernis  
*Aurea cum croceo creverunt arbuta nimbo*  
(*Eclog.* vii. 71-2).

In lxxxv. we have one of the most purely Petrarchian of Tennyson's poems; compare it with Sonnet xlii.

But Summer on the steaming floods:

Compare the whole passage, again purely Petrarchian, with Sonnet xi. So too the latter part of the section corresponds exactly in tone, spirit, and sentiment, with the divine sixth canzone. While the lines—

The great Intelligences fair  
That range above our mortal state—

find their commentary in Dante's *Convito*, ii. 5:—

Li movitori di quello (Cielo) sono sustanze separate da materia, cioè Intelligenze, le quali la volgare gente chiamano Angeli

(The movers of that third (heaven) are substances separated from matter, that is Intelligences, which the common people call angels).

Section lxxxvi. is purely Petrarchian. Section lxxxviii. is as nearly the counterpart of a very beautiful

sonnet attributed to Dante as it is possible for a poem, not a mere translation, to be. See the sonnet commencing 'Ora che 'l mondo s' adorna,' Fraticelli's *Opere minori di Dante*, vol. i. p. 226.

The dust and din and steam of town (lxxxix.):

Cf. Horace's

Fumum et opes strepitumque Romæ (*Odes*, III. xxix. 12).

In Section xc. compare the beautiful story in Lord Lytton's *Pilgrims of the Rhine* (ch. viii. 'The Soul in Purgatory').

Flits by the *sea-blue bird of March* (xci.):

Compare, in one of the most beautiful fragments of Greek poetry extant—

ἀλιπόρφυρος εῖπος ὄρνις (Fragments of ALCMAN, 26)

(The sea-purple bird of spring).

Section xciv. gives as it were in essence Jeremy Taylor's sermon on the *Return of Prayer*, *Golden Grove Sermons*, serm. iv.

There lives more faith in honest doubt,  
Believe me, than in half the creeds (xvi.):

This was Hume's remark: 'To be a philosophical sceptic is in a man of letters the first step to becoming a sound believing Christian' (*Dialogues concerning Natural Religion*, part xii. *ad fin.*).

From Section xcix. to ci. we have again the pure Petrarchian note. Compare particularly Petrarch's forty-second and forty-fourth sonnets; while the allegorical vision in ciii. is exactly on the model of similar poems in Dante and Petrarch. Compare, for example, one, the third canzone of Petrarch.

And came on that which is, and caught  
The deep pulsations of the world,  
Æonian music measuring out, &c. (xev.):

‘That which is’ is the *τὸ δύντως ὅν*, ultimate reality. An excellent commentary on the whole of this passage will be found in Iamblichus’s *Life of Pythagoras*; cf. particularly the passage in chapter xv. :—

ἀρρήτῳ τινὶ καὶ δυσεπινοήτῳ θειότητι χρώμενος ἐνητένιζε τὰς ἀκούσ, καὶ τὸν νοῦν ἐνήρειδε ταῖς μεταρσίαις τοῦ κόσμου συμφωνίαις, ἐνακούων, ὡς ἐνέφανε, μόνος αὐτὸς καὶ συνιεὶς τῆς καθολικῆς τῶν σφαιρῶν καὶ τῶν κατ’ αὐτὰς κινουμένων ἀστέρων ἀρμονίας τε καὶ συνωδίας, πληρέστερόν τι τῶν θνητῶν καὶ κατακορέστερον μέλος φθεγγομένης, &c. (*Vita Pythag.* xv., edit. Kiessling, pp. 185-6)

(By the aid of a certain ineffable divinity hard to understand he applied eagerly his ears and fixed his understanding on the sublime harmonies of the world; he alone hearing and understanding, so it seemed, the universal harmony and consonance of the spheres and of the stars which are moved through them, and which produce a fuller and intenser melody than any mortal sounds).

Or ev’n for intellect to reach  
Thro’ memory that which I became :

Compare Dante, *Paradiso*, xxxiii. 55-57 :—

Da quinci innanzi il mio veder fu maggio  
Che il parlar nostro, ch’ a tal vista cede,  
E cede la memoria a tanto oltraggio

(From henceforth my seeing was greater than our speech, which at such a vision gives way, and the memory gives way at so great excess).

When the lesser wain  
Is twisting round the polar star (ci.)

finds illustration in Sophocles, *Trachiniæ*, 130 :—

ἀρκτού  
στροφάδες κέλευθοι  
(The twisting ways of the Wain).

## CYCLE IV.: CVI. TO END

Section cvii. is an adaptation of the thirty-fourth fragment of Alcæus :—

ἴει μὲν ὁ Ζεύς, ἐκ δ' ὀράνω μέγας  
χείμων, πεπάγασιν δ' ὑδάτων ρόαι.

κάββαλλε τὸν χείμων' ἐπὶ μὲν τίθεις  
πῦρ, ἐν δὲ κίρναις οἴνον ἀφειδέως  
μέλιχρον

(Zeus is raining ; and from the heaven mighty is the storm, and the running streams have frozen : away with the winter, pile on the fire, and (mix) in the mixing-bowls, and unsparingly too, the honey-sweet wine) ;

and of Horace's imitation, *Odes*, I. ix. 1-8.

In cxiv. for the distinction between knowledge and wisdom—a favourite one with the poet, see *Love and Duty* ('The drooping flower of knowledge changed to fruit Of wisdom'), and *Locksley Hall* ('Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers')—compare Cowper, *Task*, vi. 88-99 :—

Knowledge and wisdom, far from being one,  
Have oftentimes no connection : knowledge dwells  
In heads replete with thoughts of other men ;  
Wisdom in minds attentive to their own.  
Knowledge, a rude unprofitable mass,  
The mere materials with which Wisdom builds,  
Till smooth'd, and squared, and fitted to its place,  
Does but encumber when it should enrich.  
Knowledge is proud that he has learn'd so much ;  
Wisdom is humble that he knows no more.

Cf. too the saying of Heraclitus—

πολυμαθίη νόον οὐ διδάσκει (DIOG. LAERT. ix. 1).

Compare also an interesting chapter in Aulus Gellius,

*Noctes Att.* lib. xiii. c. 8, and Milton, *Par. Reg.* iv. 320 *sqq.* See too Quarles, *Job Militant*, Meditation xi. 7-42.

In Section cxv. we have the pure Petrarchian note again, though it recalls directly Dante's sonnet referred to before.

In cxxii. the lines—

To feel once more, in placid awe,  
The strong imagination roll  
A sphere of stars about my soul—

find an interesting commentary in George Fox's *Journal*, where, describing one of his ecstasies, he says—

One morning, as I was sitting by the fire, a great cloud came over me. . . . And it was said, 'All things come by nature : and the elements and stars came over me, so that I was in a moment quite clouded with it (*Journal sub ann.* 1648, *Leeds edit. vol. i.* p. 104).

The *brute earth* lightens to the sky (cxxvii.) :

Horace's—

Bruta tellus (*Odes*, I. xxxiv. 9).

The epithet had been transferred into English before by Milton (*Comus*, 797) :

And the *brute earth* would lend her nerves.

To fool the crowd with *glorious lies* (cxxviii.) :

Transferred apparently from Crashaw—

Gilded dunghills, *glorious lies* (*To Mistress M. R.*).

Thy voice is on the rolling air ;  
. . . . I seem in star and flower  
To feel thee some diffusive power  
. . . mix'd with God and Nature thou (cxxxi.) :

Borrowed from the divine passage in Shelley's *Adonais* :—

He is made one with Nature ; there is heard  
 His voice in all her music . . . . .  
 He is a presence to be felt and known  
 In darkness and in light, from herb and stone  
 Spreading itself where'er that Power may move  
 Which has withdrawn his being to its own  
(Adonais, xlii.).

And touch with shade . . .

With *tender gloom* the roof (*Epilogue*) :

An exquisite expression adapted perhaps from Thomson :—

A certain *tender gloom* o'erspread  
(Castle of Indcl. canto i. st. lvii.).

The magnificent stanza which concludes the poem—

That God which ever lives and loves,  
 One God, one law, one element,  
 And one far-off divine event,  
 To which the whole creation moves—

may be compared with a not less magnificent passage in the fragments of Cicero's *De Republicâ* :—

Nec erit alia lex Romæ, alia Athenis, alia nunc, alia posthac ;  
 sed et omnes gentes, et omni tempore, una lex et sempiterna et  
 immutabilis continebit ; unusque erit quasi magister et imperator  
 omnium—Deus (*Fragments of De Republicâ*, lib. iii.)

(And there shall not be one law at Rome, another at Athens,  
 one law now, another afterwards, but the same law ever-  
 lasting and unchangeable will bind all nations at all times,  
 and there will be one common Master and Ruler of all—  
 God).

## CHAPTER VIII

## GROUP VII.—MAUD

AND now we come to *Maud*. In Dryden's *Miscellanies* there is a very remarkable experiment in broken rhythm, describing the meeting of two lovers in Bedlam. The verse is so modulated as to express, and express it does with exquisite skill, exalted emotion under various phases, surging now in climactic fury, now calmed and tempered, as images, terrible or placid, present themselves to minds rolling rudderless as it were on the waves of passion. It seems more than probable that this fragment suggested to Tennyson the more elaborate rhythmic scheme of *Maud*. And this is the more likely, as the rhythm and metric mechanism of the garden song in *Maud* is little more than an echo with certain minor variations of a stanza here employed. Compare with stanzas i., ii., iii., v., vi., vii., ix., the following stanza of Dryden's :—

Shall I marry the man I love?  
 And shall I conclude my pains?  
 Now blessed be the powers above,  
 I feel the blood leap in my veins,  
 With a lively leap it began to move  
 And the vapours leave my brains.

Compare the whole fragment—it is entitled 'Of a Scholar and his Mistress, who, being crossed by their friends, fell mad for one another' (Dryden's *Works*, Globe Edit. p. 384). It need hardly be said that to institute any serious comparison between Dryden's fragment and *Maud* would be as absurd as to institute any serious comparison between Milton's *Comus* and George Peele's *Old Wives' Tale*. But it is assuredly worth noticing that in a rhythmic experiment of singular interest Tennyson has been anticipated by a brother poet in his own language.

In *Maud* the reminiscences from other poets are very few indeed, fewer than in any of his longer poems.

Do we move ourselves, or are moved by an unseen hand at a game

That pushes us off from the board (Part I. iv. 5) :

These lines appear to have been suggested by Mr. Fitzgerald's version of the *Rubaiyât of Omar*, where men are described as—

Impotent pieces of the game He plays  
Upon this chequer-board of nights and days;  
Hither and thither moves and checks and slays,  
And one by one back in the closet lays.

Brought to understand  
A sad astrology, the boundless plan  
That makes you tyrants in your iron skies, &c.

(I. xviii. 4) :

The sad grand note of Lucretius : —

Nam cum suspicimus magni cælestia mundi  
Templa, super stellisque micantibus æthera fixum,  
Et venit in mentem solis lunæque viarum,  
Tunc aliis oppressa malis in pectora cura

Illa quoque ex parte factum caput erigere insit,  
 Ne quæ forte deum nobis immensa potestas  
 Sit, &c. (*De Rer. Nat. v. 1204 sqq.*)

(For when we gaze up at the celestial regions of the great universe, and ether firm fixed above the glittering stars, and turn our thoughts to the courses of the sun and moon, then into our hearts, bowed with other ills, that fear also begins to rear up its awakened head, namely that we may haply find the power of the Gods to be without limit, &c.).

Ah Christ, that it were possible  
 For one short hour to see  
 The souls we loved, that they might tell us  
 What and where they be (Part II. iv. 3):

The aspiration of the Duchess in Webster :—

O that it were possible we might  
 But hold some two days' conference with the dead;  
 From them I should learn somewhat, I am sure,  
 I never shall know here (*Duchess of Malfi*, act iv. sc. 2).

In the picture of peace in Part III. 2, one touch—

And the cobweb woven across the cannon's throat—

may have been suggested by Bacchylides, who enumerates among the signs of peace the cobwebs in the handles of the shields :—

ἐν δὲ σιδαροδέτοις πόρπαξιν αἰθᾶν  
 ἀραχνᾶν ἵστοι πέλονται

(And in the iron-woven shield-handles are the looms of tawny spiders);

or more likely by Theocritus, xvi. 96 :—

ἀράχνια δ' εἰς ὅπλ' ἀράχναι  
 λεπτὰ διαστήσαντο

(And over armour may spiders spin fine their webs).

A comparison between the section (II. ii.) describing the shell, and the beautiful epigram in

Callimachus (*Epig.* v.) describing the shell of the nautilus, is worth suggesting as an illustration of interesting points of similarity and difference between Alexandrian poetry and our own, between Callimachus and Tennyson. Both have in common a certain daintiness and grace of style and touch, and both affect sedulously the same artificial simplicity. Both appear to regard natural objects, and to regard them deliberately, as material out of which, if such an expression may be used, poetical capital may be made. But the modern poet has what the ancient has not, a penetrating sense of the mystery of this, as of every other natural phenomenon, and a power of suffusing the presentation of such phenomena with sentiment. It is, however, in their treatment of flowers that the difference, not simply between Callimachus and Tennyson, but between the Greek poets generally and poets of the Wordsworthian and Tennysonian schools, is most strikingly illustrated. Of a Greek poet it may, in a sense, be said, as it was said of Peter Bell, that

A primrose by a river's brim  
A yellow primrose was to him,  
And it was nothing more.

Even in the elaborate passages cited by Athenaeus (xv. 30, 31) from the Cyprian Poems and the *Georgics* of Nicander, there is the same absence of fancy and sentiment as there is in Homer and Theocritus. When Wordsworth wrote—

To me the meanest flower that blows can give  
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears—

he enabled us to estimate the distance which in this respect separates the moderns from the Greeks.

## CHAPTER IX

## GROUP VIII.—IDYLLS OF THE KING

OF all popular poets Tennyson most needs a commentator. He has had the good fortune to be a favourite with the crowd, but it may be doubted whether half his beauties are either relished or perceived by them. They read him as intelligent schoolboys read Virgil. They follow the story, they are struck by particular passages, which they learn by heart and think very fine; they admire what they suppose to be the simplicity of his diction; and they dwell with pleasure on such of his touches of natural description as may happen to appeal to them. But they go no further, and in going no further they are losers themselves, and the poet loses too. It has been already said—and what has been said has been illustrated at length—that the poetry of Tennyson is, even in its minutest details, of an essentially reflective character; that his great achievements lie, not in original conceptions, but in elaborate workmanship, in assimilative skill. To discover what he has assimilated, on what he has worked, is the first duty of one who would properly appreciate his poetry. Of æsthetic criticism as applied to the Laureate's

poetry, the world has already had more than enough, and æsthetic criticism is, perhaps, in the present state of Tennysonian study, of infinitely less value than analytical.

In the following section it is no part of my purpose to enter into a comparative study of the *Idylls* and of the sources from which they have been drawn, but simply to illustrate the nature and extent of Tennyson's indebtedness to his predecessors. Of the eleven Idylls, *Enid*, *Elaine*, *Gareth and Lynette*, and *The Passing of Arthur*, are simply adaptations from Malory's Romance and the *Mabinogion*, while of the remaining seven, the *Holy Grail* and *Pelleas and Ettarre* draw largely on Malory; the *Coming of Arthur* was suggested by him; so were *Balin and Balan*, *Merlin and Vivien*. The *Last Tournament* and *Guinevere* have nothing corresponding to them in Malory.

In the *Dedication to the Queen*, the fine image in the lines—

thro' all this tract of years

Wearing the white flower of a blameless life,

• • • • • • • • •

*In that fierce light which beats upon a throne,  
And blackens every blot—*

appears to have been suggested by a passage in Alexandre Dumas, *Vicomte de Bragelonne*, where, speaking of Louis XIV., he says—

Il a dû souffrir toutes ses humiliations, toutes ses gênes au grand jour, *au soleil impitoyable de la royauté, place noyée de lumière, où toute tâche paraît une fange sordide* (*Vicomte de Bragelonne*, edit. Masque et Cie., p. 398, chapter entitled 'La Tentateur').

*The Coming of Arthur* is moulded, though with important additions, alterations, and modification, out of the first three books of the *Morte d'Arthur*. *Gareth and Lynette* is, with certain additions and alterations, pieced together from Malory's seventh book. The introduction, however, as far as the passage where Gareth asks his boon, is the poet's own invention. From that point the narrative follows with more or less fidelity the prose story. As it advances divergences appear. The history becomes complicated with an elaborate allegory within an allegory, much darker and more troublesome than the darkest and most troublesome in Spenser's epic. In the poem we have four combats for the deliverance of the lady in the Castle Perilous, in the prose story seven. In the prose story the knights who engage in fight figure respectively as the Black, Green, Red, and Blue Knights: in the poem they become the Morning Star, the Noonday Sun, the Evening Star; the Blue Knight having no counterpart. Malory's Red Knight of the Red Lands, who is the last to be encountered, appears in the poem as Death. For the semi-comic incident which results in the apparition of the blooming boy, the reader has to thank the poet. Of reminiscences of other poets there are not many in this Idyll. The picture of Old Lot—

Lo, where thy father Lot beside the hearth  
Lies like a log, and all but smoulder'd out—

was no doubt suggested by that of old Laertes in the *Odyssey*. The blaze-bickering shield of the Knight of the Noonday Sun—

As if the flower,  
That blows a globe of after arrowlets,

Ten thousand fold had grown, flash'd the fierce shield,  
All sun; and Gareth's eyes had flying blots  
Before them:

This was of course suggested by Ariosto's

Scudo mortal che, coma pria  
Si scopre, il suo splendor si gli occhi assalta,  
La vista tolle e tanto occupa i sensi,  
Che come morto rimaner conviensi

(*Orland. Fur.* iii. st. 67)

(The deadly shield which, as soon as it is uncovered, its splendour so assails the eyes, takes away the sight, and so seizes the senses that one must needs become as dead);

but it owes something to Virgil, *AEn.* x. 271—

*Vastos umbo vomit aureus ignes*

(The shield's golden boss vomits mighty flames).

But as the cur  
Plückt from the cur he fights with, ere his cause  
Be cool'd with fighting, follows, being named,  
His owner, but remembers all, and growls  
Remembering:

Graphic, but how inferior to Ariosto's simile of the fighting curs:—

Come soglion talor dui can mordenti,  
O per invidia, o per alto odio mossi,  
Avvicinarsi dignignando i denti,  
Con occhi biechi, e più che bracia rossi;  
Indi a' morsi venir, di rabbia ardenti  
Con aspri ringhi e rabbuffati dossi

(*Orl. Fur.* ii. 5)

(As sometimes two vicious curs, incited either by envy or deep-seated hate, will draw nigh one another, snarling and grinning, with eyes asquint and burning redder than a live coal, afterwards on fire with rage will come to biting, grinning savagely and with backs all ruffled up).

The fine touch—

Up like fire he started—

recalls Milton, *Par. Lost*, iv. 813:—

Up he starts, as when a spark

Lights on a heap of nitrous powder;

or perhaps more immediately by the line—

Sprang upward, like a pyramid of fire (*id. ii. 1013*).

The fine simile where Gareth's adversary is compared to a buoy at sea, which dips and springs, but never sinks in spite of winds and waves rolling over it, may possibly have been suggested by a simile in Lycophron, where Ulysses is compared to a cork in the sea with the winds and waves rolling over but not sinking it:—

ἔσται, παρ' ἄλλου δ' ἄλλος, ὡς πεύκης κλάδος

βύκτης στροβητὸς φελλὸν ἐνθρώσκων πνοαῖς

(*Cassandra*, edit. Potter, x. 755-6).

*Arthur's harp tho' summer-wan,  
In counter motion to the clouds:*

The same phenomenon was noticed and described by Lucretius:—

Splendida signa videntur

*Labier adversum nubes* (iv. 445-6).

But one of the most interesting illustrations of Tennyson's method of dealing with his raw material is to be found in *Enid*. Here we can follow him step by step; here we can study in detail the distinctive features of his art. The story itself is to be found in the *Mabinogion*. That charming collection of tales was translated in 1838 by Lady Charlotte Guest, and it is of Lady Charlotte's translation that

Tennyson has availed himself. To give something of an allegorical significance to the character of Geraint and to make the story bear on the main action of his epic, Tennyson assigns the departure of Geraint from Arthur's Court, not to any anxiety on the part of the young man to return to his aged father and his troubled realm, but to a desire to sever Enid from communication with Guinevere, whose guilty love for Launcelot was now beginning to be suspected.

And many there were who accompanied Geraint, and never was there seen a fairer host journeying towards the Severn. . . . And for a long time he abode at home, and he began to shut himself up in the chamber of his wife, and he took no delight in anything besides, insomuch that he gave up the friendship of his nobles together with his hunting and his amusements.

In Tennyson's versification of this the effect of the five repetitions of the word 'forgetful'—

Forgetful of the falcon and the hunt,  
Forgetful of the tilt and tournament,  
Forgetful, &c.—

has often been deservedly admired. We may notice, however, that it would seem to be an echo from a similarly effective iteration in Keats's *Isabella* :—

And she *forgot* the stars and moon and sun,  
And she *forgot* the blue above the trees,  
And she *forgot* the dells where waters run,  
And she *forgot* the chilly autumn breeze.

And there was murmuring and scoffing concerning him among the inhabitants of the palace on account of his relinquishing so completely their companionship for the love of his wife. And when Erlin heard these things he spoke unto Enid, and inquired of her whether it was she that had caused Geraint to act thus. 'Not I,' said she; 'there is nothing more hateful to me than this.' And she was very sorrowful:

And by and by the people, when they met . . .  
In twos and threes, or fuller companies,  
Began to scoff and jeer and babble of him  
As of a prince whose manhood was all gone,  
And molten down in mere uxoriousness.  
And this she gather'd from the people's eyes :  
This too the women who attired her head,  
To please her, dwelling on his boundless love,  
Told Enid, and they sadden'd her the more.

This last is one of those delicate and thoughtful touches which Tennyson seldom misses an opportunity for introducing.

And one morning in the summer time they were upon their couch. And Enid was without sleep in the apartment, which had windows of glass. And the sun shone upon the couch ; and the clothes had slipped from off Geraint's arms and breast, and he was asleep. Then she gazed upon the marvellous beauty of his appearance, and she said, 'Alas, and am I the cause that these arms and this breast have lost their glory?' And as she said this the tears dropped from her eyes. And the tears she shed and the words she had spoken woke him.

In this clear and beautiful picture the only feature which awaited development lay in the figure of Geraint ; here and here only expansion was needed ; here and here only expansion is found :—

At last it chanced that on a summer morn  
(They sleeping each by either) the new sun  
Beat through the blindless casements of the room  
And heated the strong warrior in his dreams,  
Who moving cast the coverlet aside  
And bared the knotted column of his throat,  
The massive square of his heroic breast,  
And arms on which the standing muscle sloped.

And Enid woke and sat beside the couch,  
Admiring him, and thought within herself,  
Was ever man so grandly made as he ?

..... and bowing over him,  
Low to her own heart piteously she said :

‘Am I the cause, I the poor cause that men  
Reproach you, saying all your force is gone ?

O me, I fear that I am no true wife.’  
Half inwardly, half audibly she spoke,  
And the strong passion in her made her weep  
True tears upon his broad and naked breast,  
And these awoke him.

The words which raise Geraint’s suspicion are not found in the Romance. In the Romance—and we are not quite sure that the poet has in this case improved upon it—Geraint is represented as realising the ignoble state into which he had sunk, and as thinking it not improbable therefore that his wife might have her eyes on a worthier mate. He resolves to show her that he still is what he was when he won her love. Abruptly ordering her to clothe herself in her meanest dress, and after making a few necessary preparations, the two set out in quest of adventures. In the Laureate’s version this meanest dress is defined. It is the dress in which Geraint first found her apparelled when he raised her from poverty to splendour. This happy touch enables the poet to relate by way of episode the history of his hero and heroine—their courtship and marriage, their early happy days with Arthur and Guinevere.<sup>1</sup> At this point, then, which is in the Romance the middle portion, we must, in tracing the story as represented by Tennyson, turn to what are, in the Romance, the opening pages, for the poet has in true epic fashion begun *in mediis rebus*. The

<sup>1</sup> Compare the space filled by the episode in the *Peleus and Thetis* of Catullus.

story as told in the *Mabinogion* and as told by Tennyson is substantially the same. Occasionally he follows the prose story with minute fidelity of detail, as for example in the description of Geraint:—

The rider was a fair-headed youth, and a golden-hilted sword was at his side, and round him was a scarf of blue purple, at each corner of which was a golden apple:

For Prince Geraint,  
Late also, wearing neither hunting-dress  
Nor weapon, save a golden-hilted brand,  
· · · · ·  
A purple scarf, at either end whereof  
There swung an apple of the purest gold,  
Sway'd round about him;

or in the meeting with the surly dwarf, where he merely versifies the prose paragraph. One happy touch the poet has introduced which is worth noticing. When the Romance tells how the dwarf struck Geraint 'so that the blood coloured the scarf he wore,' it adds: 'Then Geraint put his hand upon the hilt of his sword, but he took counsel with himself and considered that it would be no vengeance for him to slay the dwarf, *and to be attacked unarmed by the armed knight.*' This becomes in Tennyson's poem—

His quick instinctive hand  
Caught at the hilt as to abolish him,  
But he, from his *exceeding manfulness*  
*And pure nobility of temperament,*  
*Wroth to be wroth at such a worm, refrain'd.*

It would be tedious to follow the story step by step, but it may not be uninteresting to note how careful the poet is, as he treads closely in the tracks of his original, to seize every opportunity for introducing a picturesque touch. Thus,

They went along a fair and even and lofty ridge of ground  
becomes

They climb'd upon a fair and even ridge  
*And show'd themselves against the sky.*

The simple statement 'and they were polishing shields  
and burnishing swords, and washing armour and  
shoeing horses,' reappears as

Everywhere  
Was hammer laid to hoof, and the hot hiss  
And bustling whistle of the youth who scour'd  
His master's armour.

The 'tattered garments' of old Yniol become 'fray'd  
magnificence, Once fit for feasts of ceremony.' The  
'when the dawn arose' of the Romance becomes  
'When the pale and bloodless east began To quicken  
to the sun.' The words 'And at a little distance from  
the town he saw an old palace in ruins, wherein was  
a hall that was falling to decay ; and when he came  
near the palace he saw but one chamber, and a bridge  
of marble leading to it,' have been expanded into one  
of the most exquisite pieces of descriptive writing we  
ever remember to have met with. In the account  
of Geraint's visit to Yniol the Laureate has occasionally  
departed slightly from the story. For Enid's song he  
had of course no hint; nor, again, is the speech in  
which Yniol relates the injuries he has received from  
the Sparrow-hawk translated from any corresponding  
speech in the prose story. Both of these additions  
are undoubtedly improvements. But there is one  
addition which might surely have been spared. ““I  
will engage if I escape from the tournament to love  
the maiden as long as I live, and if I do not escape  
she shall remain unsullied as before.” “Gladly will I

permit thee," said the hoary-headed man.' This is simple and natural, and this Tennyson versifies, but carefully adds that old Yniol went to consult his wife on the subject.

Mother, a maiden is a tender thing,  
And best by her that bore her understood.  
..... ere thou go to rest,  
Tell her, and prove her heart toward the prince.

This certainly trembles on bathos, and bathos of a peculiarly repulsive kind. It degrades Yniol and it degrades Enid. It disenchants us. It transfers us suddenly from the poetry of the past into the flattest prose of the present; it conjures up in Enid the image of a conventional English young lady, it conjures up in Yniol a conventional English father—both of them, no doubt, in real life, very estimable personages, but both of them entirely out of place in heroic poetry, or, indeed, in poetry of any kind. These concessions to petty conventionality are unfortunately only too common in the Laureate's writings. We find him, for example, in *Elaine* going out of his way to inform us that when his heroine visited Sir Launcelot she was escorted by her brother, and that regularly, as the night approached, she retired to her friends in the neighbouring town. How much more natural, how much more manly, is honest Malory:—

So this maiden never went from Sir Launcelot, but watched him day and night, and did such attendance there was never woman did more kindlier for man than she.

Nothing is so coarse as false delicacy.

It is very rarely that Tennyson allows his prose

original to excel his poetical version in picturesqueness, but in Geraint's contest with the Sparrow-hawk the prose narrative is certainly superior to the Idyll. The lines—

Then each, dishorsed and drawing, lash'd at each  
 So often and with such blows, that all the crowd  
 Wonder'd . . . . .  
 . . . . . And twice they breathed, and still  
 The dew of their great labour, and the blood  
 Of their strong bodies flowing, drain'd their force—

are graphic and are Virgilian ; but the original—

And they fought on foot with their swords until their arms  
 struck sparks of fire like stars from one another, and thus they  
 continued fighting until the blood and sweat obscured the light  
 from their eyes—

is far more spirited. For what follows—Enid's trouble about her faded dress, her dream, Geraint's long speech to the mother of his betrothed—the poet has drawn on his own invention. This brings us to the second part, and here the Idyll again closely follows the Romance, taking it up at the point where the episode broke it off :—

And he desired Enid to mount her horse and to ride forward and to keep a long way before him. 'And whatsoever thou mayest see, and whatsoever thou mayest hear,' said he, 'do thou not turn back. And unless I speak to thee, say not thou one word :'

'I charge thee ride before,  
 Ever a good way on before; and this  
 I charge thee, on thy duty as a wife,  
 Whatever happens, not to speak to me,  
 No, not a word.'

And they set forward. And he did not choose the pleasantest and most frequented road, but that which was the wildest and most beset by thieves and robbers and venomous animals :

They past  
 The marches and by bandit-haunted holds,  
 Gray swamps and pools, waste places of the hern,  
 And wildernesses, perilous paths, they rode.

These and the lines which follow—let the reader turn to them—are fine illustrations of Tennyson's power of expanding a rough sketch into a finished picture.

And they saw four armed horsemen come forth from the forest. When the horsemen had beheld them, one of them said to the others, 'Behold, here is a good occasion for us to capture two horses and armour and a lady likewise: for this we shall have no difficulty in doing against yonder single knight who hangs his head so pensively and heavily: '

But when the fourth part of the day was gone,  
 Then Enid was aware of three tall knights  
 On horseback, wholly arm'd. . . . .  
 And heard one crying to his fellow, 'Look,  
 Here comes a laggard hanging down his head,  
 Who seems no bolder than a beaten hound.  
 Come, we will slay him and will have his horse  
 And armour, and his damsels shall be ours.'

And Enid heard this discourse. 'The vengeance of Heaven be upon me if I would not rather receive my death from his hand than from the hand of any other, and though he should slay me, yet will I speak to him.' So she waited for Geraint until he came near her. 'Lord,' said she, 'didst thou hear the words of these men concerning thee?' Then he lifted up his eyes and looked at her angrily: 'Thou hadst only,' said he, 'to hold thy peace, as I bade thee; I wish but for silence, and not for warning. And though thou should'st desire to see my defeat and my death, yet do I feel no dread: '

Then Enid ponder'd in her heart, and said:  
 'I will go back a little to my lord,  
 And I will tell him all their caitiff talk;  
 For, be he wroth even to slaying me,

Far liefer by his dear hand had I die  
Than that my lord should suffer loss or shame.'

He made a wrathful answer : ' Did I wish  
Your warning or your silence ? One command  
I laid upon you, not to speak to me.

Well then, look—for now,  
Whether ye wish me victory or defeat,  
Long for my life, or hunger for my death,  
Yourself shall see my vigour is not lost.'

Then the combat ensues, in which Geraint is victorious.

Geraint dismounted from his horse and took the arms of the men he had slain and placed them upon their saddles, and tied together the reins of the horses. ' Behold thou what thou must do,' said he ; ' take the four horses and drive them before thee : '

He bound the suits  
Of armour on their horses, each on each,  
And tied the bridle-reins of all the three  
Together, and said to her, ' Drive them on  
Before you : ' and she drove them through the waste.

In the adventure which is next described, the only noticeable additions in the Idyll are the two fine similes in which the bandit transfixed by Geraint is compared to the ' great piece of a promontory That had a sapling growing on it,' and the simile in which Geraint's war-cry echoing distinctly through the confused roar of a battlefield is compared to the ' drumming thunder of the huger fall' heard by a listener who is standing amid the crash of nearer cataracts—two similes worthy of the *Iliad*, and not to be found in it. In the Romance a third combat with five other horsemen is narrated, but the poet, probably thinking that poor Enid had already enough to do with the six horses entrusted to her, very

judiciously omits this, and passes on to the meeting with the youth on his way to the mowers. For a while the Idyll and the Romance continue to move parallel. With the visit of the Earl they diverge. In the Romance the Earl is Dwyrm, a stranger both to Enid and Geraint. On hearing of their arrival in his dominions he seeks their acquaintance, entertains them, and endeavours to induce Enid to leave her husband. For Dwyrm, Tennyson has, with admirable tact, substituted Limours, a young nobleman 'femininely fair and dissolutely pale,' who had formerly been Enid's suitor. With this alteration, he again takes up the prose story.

'Have I thy permission' (said the Earl to Geraint) 'to go and converse with yonder maiden, for I see that she is apart from thee?' 'Thou hast it gladly,' said he:

'Your leave, my lord, to cross the room, and speak  
To your good damsel there who sits apart,  
And seems so lonely?' 'My free leave,' he said.

He then makes his suit.

And Enid considered that it was advisable to encourage him in his request. 'Come here to-morrow, and take me away as though I knew nothing thereof:'

But Enid fear'd his eyes,  
And answer'd with such craft as women use.  
..... 'Come with morn  
And snatch me from him as by violence.'

And at the usual hour they (Geraint and Enid) went to sleep, and at midnight she arose and placed all Geraint's armour together, so that it might be ready to put on. And, although fearful of her errand, she came to the side of Geraint's bed, and she spoke to him softly, saying, 'My lord, arise, for these were the words of the Earl to me.' So she told Geraint all that had passed;

But Enid, left alone with Prince Geraint,

Held commune with herself. . . . .  
Anon she rose, and stepping lightly, heap'd  
The pieces of his armour in one place,  
All to be there against a sudden need.

Then breaking his command of silence given,  
She told him all that Earl Limours had said.

‘Desire the man of the house to come here ;’ and the man of the house came to him. ‘Dost thou know how much I owe thee ?’ asked Geraint. ‘I think thou owest but little.’ ‘Take the eleven horses and the eleven suits of armour.’ ‘Heaven reward thee, Lord,’ said he, ‘but I spent not the value of one suit of armour upon thee.’ ‘For that reason,’ said he, ‘thou wilt be the richer :’

‘Call the host, and bid him bring  
Charger and palfrey.’

‘Thy reckoning, friend ?’ And ere he learnt it, ‘Take Five horses and their armours ;’ and the host, Suddenly honest, answer’d in amaze,  
‘My lord, I scarce have spent the worth of one.’  
‘Ye will be all the wealthier,’ said the Prince.

After the subsequent combat with the Earl and his followers the poet again breaks from the legend. In the legend Geraint meets with other adventures. Among them he engages with some giants. In one of these engagements, though victorious, he faints from loss of blood, and sinks down by the wayside. At this point the story is again taken up in the Idyll, though, curiously enough, Tennyson now substitutes Doorm for Limours as he had before substituted Limours for Doorm. The picture of this brawny hero, ‘broad-faced, with under-fringe of russet beard,’ as

well as the words put in his mouth when he first sees Enid, belong to the poet, as there is nothing in the Romance to suggest them. For the introduction of the band of courtesans in Doorm's court he is also responsible. For the rest the Romance is followed closely: the carrying of Geraint on a shield into Doorm's hall—the sorrow of Enid—the rude requests of Doorm that she should eat—her declining to do so ‘till the man that is upon yonder bier shall eat likewise’—her refusal to share Doorm's earldom with him—her refusal to dress herself in fine clothes, are transcribed from the prose story. How closely, may be judged from one or two samples.

‘Truly,’ said the Earl, ‘it is of no more avail for me to be gentle with thee, than ungentle,’ and he gave her a box on the ear:

In his mood  
Crying, ‘I count it of no more avail,  
Dame, to be gentle than ungentle with you;  
Take my salute,’ unknightly with flat hand,  
However lightly, smote her on the cheek.

Thereupon she raised a loud and piercing shriek, and her lamentations were much greater than they had been before, for she considered in her mind that had Geraint been alive he durst not have struck her thus:

Then Enid, in her utter helplessness,  
And since she thought, ‘He had not dared to do it,  
Except he surely knew my lord was dead,’  
Sent forth a sudden sharp and bitter cry,  
*As of a wild thing taken in a trap,*  
*Which sees the trapper coming through the wood.*

These are the touches in which Tennyson has no rival save Dante alone.

But, behold, at the sound of her cry, Geraint revived from his swoon, and he sat up on the bier, and finding his sword in the hollow of his shield, he rushed to the place where the Earl was, . . . and clove him in twain until his sword was stayed by the table. Then all left the board and fled away. And this was not so much through fear of the living as through the dread they felt at seeing the dead man rise up to slay them :

This heard Geraint, and grasping at his sword  
(It lay beside him in the hollow shield),  
Made but a single bound, and with a sweep of it  
Shore through the swarthy neck. . . . .  
And all the men and women in the hall  
Rose when they saw the dead man rise, and fled  
Yelling as from a spectre.

The beautiful speech which is put into Geraint's mouth when the two are left alone in the hall has no counterpart in the Romance, which merely says : ' And Geraint looked upon Enid and was grieved for two causes : one was to see how Enid had lost her colour, and the other to know that she was in the right.'

By a very happy stroke Tennyson represents the knight who meets them on their way, and who but for Enid's entreaty would have borne down on Geraint—now ill able for loss of blood to defend himself—to be Edyrn, the Sparrow-hawk, the insolent knight with whom Geraint had in the first part of the poem contended. He thus connects the Idyll immediately with Arthur, for Edyrn is now Arthur's knight, and to the power of Arthur is attributed the change which has transformed an insolent minion into a noble and chivalrous soldier. This connection with Arthur is also emphasised by the poet representing his hero and heroine terminating their wanderings at Caerleon,

and not, as in the Romance, proceeding at once to Geraint's dominions.

Many poets have been laid under contribution in *Enid*.

Arms on which the standing muscle sloped,  
As slopes a wild brook o'er a little stone,  
Running too vehemently to break upon it :

This is taken with an ingenious and happy turn from Theocritus, *Idyll* xxii. 48 *sqq.* :—

ἐν δὲ μύες στερεοῖσι βραχίστιν ἄκρον ὑπ' ὕμον  
ἔστασαν, ἡύτε πέτροι ὀλούτροχοι οὖς τε κυλίνδων  
χειμάρροις ποταμὸς μεγάλαις περιέξετε δίναις

(And the muscles on his brawny arms close under the shoulder stood out like boulders which the wintry torrent has rolled and worn smooth in the mighty eddies).

The Virgilian parallel for—

O noble breast and all puissant arms—

in *AEn.* iv. 11 is obvious. The burden of Enid's song—

Turn, Fortune, turn thy wheel—

is from Dante :—

Però giri fortuna la sua ruota,  
Come la piace (*Inf.* xv. 95);

cf. too *King Lear*, act ii. scene 2.

O purblind race of miserable men . . .  
Here, thro' the feeble twilight of this world  
Groping :

Almost literally from Lucretius, lib. ii. 14–16 :—

O miseras hominum mentes, O pectora cæca,  
Qualibus in tenebris vitæ, quantisque periclis  
Degitur hoc ævi quodecumque

(O miserable minds of men, O purblind breasts, in what darkness of life and in how great dangers is passed all this term of life, whatever be its duration).

He *sow'd a slander* in the common ear :

*Rumoresque serit varios* (VIRGIL, *AEn.* xii. 228)

(And sows various rumours).

On either *shining shoulder* laid a hand :

Homer's epithet for the shoulder, *Odyssey*, xi. 128—

ἀνὰ φαιδίμῳ ὥμῳ—

which Mr. Lang wrongly translates, but perhaps rightly interprets, as 'stout.'

The beautiful expression—

 ever fail'd to draw  
The quiet night into her blood—

is transferred from Virgil, *AEn.* iv. 530 :—

Neque unquam  
Solvitur in somnos oculisve aut pectore noctem  
Accipit

(And she never relaxes into sleep<sup>1</sup> or receives the night in eyes or bosom).

A shell  
That keeps the wear and polish of the wave :

No doubt a mere coincidence, but a curiously exact translation of a line in Lycophron, *Cassandra*, 790 :—

ὡς κόγχος ἄλμη πάντοθεν περιτριβείς

(As a shell on all sides worn smooth by the sea).

The vivid touch in the line—

She fear'd  
In every wavering brake an ambuscade—

<sup>1</sup> Or possibly *somni* may mean dreams.

recalls Juvenal's timid traveller :—

Et motæ ad lunam trepidabis arundinis umbram (*Sat.* x. 21)

(And you will tremble at the shadow of the reed as it waves to the moon).

Compare too the vivid picture of a timid traveller at night, given by that inexplicably neglected poet Valerius Flaccus :—

Ac velut ignotâ captus regione viarum  
Noctivagum qui carpit iter; non aure quiescit,  
Non oculis; noctisque metus niger auget utrimque  
Campus, et occurrens umbris majoribus arbor

(*Argon.* ii. 43-7).

Which was the red cock *shouting* to the light :

This singularly bold and vivid expression appears to have been suggested by the author of the *Batrachomyomachia* :—

ἔως ἐβόησεν ἀλέκτωρ (*Bat.* 192)

(Until the cock shouted).

She saw

*Dust*, and the *points of lances* bicker in it :

Compare the fine passage in Xenophon's *Anabasis*, in which the approach of an army at a distance is described :—

ἔφανη κονιορτὸς . . . τάχα δὴ καὶ χαλκός τις ἥστραπτε  
(*Anab.* I. viii. 8)

(And a dust cloud was seen, and very soon, indeed, too, bronze flashed [from out of it]).

And all in passion uttering a *dry shriek* :

This singularly expressive word is the *sicca vox* of the Latin poets. Cf. Ovid, *Met.* ii. 278, and cf. also Wordsworth, *Peter Bell*, part i. :—

The ass did lengthen out  
The long *dry* see-saw of his horrible bray.

But the use of the word in *The Passing of Arthur*—

*Dry* clash'd his harness—

brings us to its real source, Homer. Cf.

*κόρυθες δ' ἀμφ' αὐτον ἀντευν* (*Il.* xii. 160)

and

*καρφαλέον δέ οι ἀσπὶς ἄστεν* (*Il.* xiii. 409);

cf. also Virgil's

*aridus fragor* (*Georg.* i. 357).

Like a shoal  
Of darting fish, that on a summer morn  
Come slipping o'er their shadows on the sand,  
But if a man who stands upon the brink  
But lift a shining hand . . . . .  
There is not left the twinkle of a fin :

Compare this with Keats's less finished but equally graphic picture :—

Where swarms of minnows  
. . . . . ever nestle  
Their silver bellies on the pebbly sand,  
If you but scantily hold out the hand  
That very instant not one will remain  
(Poem entitled 'I stood tip-toe').

And we will live like two birds in one nest :

So the lover in Theocritus :—

*ποίησαι καλιὰν μίαν εἰνὶ ἐνὶ δενδρέω* (*Id.* xxix. 12)

(Make one nest in one tree).

Passing by *Balin and Balan*, which owes very little either to Malory or to other writers, we come to *Merlin*

and Vivien. The hint, but nothing more than the hint, for this poem was derived from Malory.

    Ah, little rat that borest in the dyke  
 Thy hole by night to let the boundless deep  
 Down upon far-off cities

recalls Sydney Smith's humorous simile :—

I do not attack him from love of glory, but from love of utility, as a burgomaster hunts a rat in a dyke for fear it should flood a province.

    The *blind wave* feeling round his long sea hall  
 In silence:

An idea evolved out of a hint from Homer, his *κῦμα κωφόν* (*Iliad*, xiv. 16), where it means a wave dumb or noiseless, not sufficiently swelled to break. Alcman (Frag. iv. 6) uses the same epithet in application to a wave.

    May this hard earth cleave to the Nadir hell,  
 Down, down, and close again, and nip me flat  
 If I be such a traitress :

From Homer, *Il.* iv. 182, &c., through Virgil (*AEn.* iv. 24) :—

    Sed mihi vel tellus optem prius ima dehiscat.

    He dragg'd his eyebrow lashes down, and made  
 A snowy penthouse for his hollow eyes :

Suggested by Homer :—

πᾶν δέ τ' ἐπισκύνιον κάτω ἔλκεται, ὅσσε καλύπτων (*Iliad*, xvii. 136)  
 (And drags down all his brow, covering his eyes).

    For in a wink the false love turns to hate :

More bluntly Milton :—

    Lust, hard by hate (*Par. Lost*, i. 417).

We now come to the poem which is perhaps the most popular of the Idylls—*Launcelot and Elaine*. Almost all the details of this beautiful episode are taken from the eighteenth book of Malory's work. A minute comparison with the prose tale will, indeed, leave Tennyson little but graces of diction and consummate skill as a story-teller in verse. We are, however, indebted to him for the legend of the diamonds, for Elaine's song and dream, and for the fine portrait of Launcelot. The action of the piece opens, as in *Enid*, at a central point. We find Elaine in the possession of her hero's shield, and already under the spell of that passion which was to bring her to the grave. The poet then takes us back, telling us by way of episode under what circumstances she obtained the shield—under what circumstances she lost her young heart.

Launcelot, having resolved to joust in disguise in a great tournament which was about to be held at Camelot, presents himself before the Lord of Astolat.

'Fair Sir,' said Sir Launcelot to his host, 'I would pray you to lend me a shield that were not openly known.' 'Sir,' said his host, 'ye shall have your desire, for me seemeth ye to be one of the likeliest knights of the world, and therefore I will show you friendship. Sir, wit ye well that I have two sons but late made knights, and the eldest hight Sir Tirre, and he was hurt that same day that he was made a knight, and his shield you shall have.' This old baron had a daughter that was called that time the Fair Maid of Astolat. And ever she beheld Sir Launcelot wonderfully.

How dramatically the Laureate has set this scene will be familiar to every one; and familiar to every one will also be the singularly graphic picture of Launcelot

which he has taken the opportunity of giving us. The lines—

Marr'd as he was, he seem'd the goodliest man  
That ever among ladies ate in hall,  
And noblest—

are transferred from Sir Ector's lament over Launcelot in chapter clxxvi. of the Romance :—

Thou wert the goodliest person that ever came among press of knights, and thou wert the meekest man and the gentlest that ever ate in hall among ladies.

In the portrait of Lavaine—

By all the sweet and sudden passion of youth  
Towards greatness in its elder, 'you have fought.  
O tell us—for we live apart—you know  
Of Arthur's glorious wars !'—

who will not call to mind Virgil's description of the young and generous Pallas? The haunting beauty of these three lines (*Aeneid*, x. 160–162), so simple, so magically picturesque, is not likely to have escaped a reader like Tennyson :—

Pallasque sinistro  
Affixus lateri jam quærit sidera, opacæ  
Noctis iter, *jam quæ passus terrâque marique.*

And Elaine besought Sir Launcelot to wear upon him at the justs a token of hers. 'Fair damsel,' said Sir Launcelot, 'and if I grant you that, ye may say I do more for your love than ever I did for lady or damsel.' And then he said, 'Fair maiden, I will grant you to wear a token of yours, and therefore what it is show it me.' 'Sir,' she said, 'it is a red sleeve of mine, of scarlet well embroidered with great pearls.' So Sir Launcelot received it, and said, 'Never did I erst so much for no damsel.' And then Sir Launcelot betook the fair maiden his shield in keeping, and prayed her to keep that until that he came again:

Suddenly flash'd on her a wild desire,  
 That he should wear her favour at the tilt.  
*She braved a riotous heart in asking for it.*  
 'Fair Lord . . . . . will you wear  
 My favour at this tourney?' 'Nay,' said he,  
 'Fair lady, since I never yet have worn  
 Favour of any lady in the lists.'

Well, I will wear it, fetch it out to me;  
 What is it? And she told him, 'A red sleeve  
 Broider'd with pearls,' and brought it; then he bound  
 Her token on his helmet, with a smile,  
 Saying, 'I never yet have done so much  
 For any maiden living,' and the blood  
*Sprang to her face. . . . .*  
 'Do me this grace, my child, to have my shield  
 In keeping till I come.'

Then follow the tournament—the victory—the wounding of Launcelot. The slight differences of detail between the incidents as given in the Romance and as given in the Idyll, we shall not stop to consider, as they are of little moment. But in the visit of Sir Gawain to Astolat there is in the Idyll an interesting variation. In the Romance he appears as the loyal friend of Launcelot. In the Idyll he appears as a treacherous trifler, attempting to estrange Elaine from her lover, and hinting that, even after she has become Launcelot's bride, they may, if she will 'learn the courtesies of the Court,' learn to 'know each other.' This is no doubt introduced to illustrate the increasing corruption of the Round Table—to mark the growth of that canker which, originating with Launcelot and Guinevere, was now rapidly pursuing its destructive course. Meanwhile Launcelot is lying wounded and grievously sick at a hermitage to which he has been carried.

So Sir Lavaine brought her in to Launcelot, and when she saw him lie so sick and pale in his bed, she might not speak, but suddenly she fell to the earth down suddenly in a swoon. . . . And when she came to herself Sir Launcelot kissed her, and said 'Fair maiden, why fare ye thus ? '

And her Lavaine across the poplar grove  
 Led to the caves. . . . .  
 Then she that saw him lying unsleek, unshorn,  
 Gaunt, as it were the skeleton of himself,  
 Utter'd a little tender dolorous cry.  
 The sound not wonted in a place so still  
 Woke the sick knight. . . . .  
 Her face was near, and as we kiss the child  
 That does the task assign'd, he kiss'd her face.  
 At once she slipp'd like water to the floor.

Whether the Laureate has in this case improved upon his original, whether a sudden shock of surprise as in the Romance, or a sudden kiss from a lover as in the poem, would be most likely to make a maiden faint away, I must leave to critics more experienced than myself in such matters to decide.

Elaine never went from Sir Launcelot, but watched him night and day, and there was never woman did more kindlier for man than she :

And never woman yet since man's first fall  
 Did kindlier unto man ; but her deep love  
 Upbore her.

And now the plot deepens. Launcelot has recovered, and is about to take his departure.

' My Lord Launcelot, now I see ye will depart. Now, fair knight and courteous knight, have mercy upon me and suffer me not to die for thy love.' ' What would ye that I did ? ' said Sir Launcelot. ' I would have you to my husband,' said Elaine. ' Fair damsel, I thank you,' said Sir Launcelot, ' but truly,' said he, ' I cast me never to be a wedded man.' ' Then, fair knight,' said she, ' will ye be my love ? ' ' Jesu defend me,' said Sir

Launcelot, 'for then I rewarded to your father and your brother full evil for their great goodness.' 'Alas!' said she, 'then must I die for your love.' 'But because, fair damsel, that ye love me as you say you do, I will for your goodwill and kindness show you good goodness. Whensoever ye shall set your heart upon some knight that will wed you, I shall give you together a thousand pounds yearly.' 'Of all this,' said the maiden, 'I will none, but if ye will not wed me, or else be my lover, wit ye well, Sir Launcelot, my good days are done.'

In Tennyson's version of this—there is no necessity for quoting it—Elaine, though as fervidly emphatic, is less indelicately importunate. The struggle between the uncontrollable passion which has made her speak, and the maiden modesty which would seal her lips—a struggle of which there are no traces in the Romance—is depicted with great skill. But not so powerfully or subtly, I cannot forbear adding, as the same struggle has been depicted by Apollonius Rhodius. Let any one who would compare the modern with the ancient poet, in this, surely a crucial test of a poet's power, read side by side with this portion of *Elaine* the *Argonautica* from line 643 of the third book to line 709—and he will read further. Tennyson has been careful to soften Launcelot's refusal by the paternal air he makes him assume in assuring the poor maid that her love is mere sudden fancy; that he is thrice her age; that she would be throwing herself away upon him. The promise of 'a thousand pounds' in the event of her marriage, is magnified into 'broad land and territory,' and enhanced by the assurance that the donor would be her knight for ever. But all is in vain—

She shrieked shrilly and fell down in a swoon, and then women bare her into her chamber, and there she made overmuch

sorrow. . . . And she made such sorrow day and night that she never slept, eat, nor drank.

There is no need for us to comment on Tennyson's exquisite expansion of these simple words. It may be noticed in passing that the fine line—ludicrously out of place in the mouth of a child like Elaine—

Never yet  
Was noble man but made ignoble talk—

is the precise equivalent of a line in *Æschylus*—

ο δ' ἀφθονητός γ' οὐκ ἐπίζηλος πέλει (*Agamemnon*, 908)

(He who is not an object of envy is not an object of emulation).

So when she had thus endured a ten days that she feebled so that she must needs pass out of the world, then she shrived her clean and received her Creator. . . . And then she called her father and her brother, and heartily she prayed her father that her brother might write a letter like as she did endite it. And when the letter was written word by word like as she divised, then she prayed her father that she might be watched until she were dead.

All this Tennyson has of course exactly reproduced, as all that follows belongs likewise to Malory—the black-draped barge, the gorgeous coverlet, the dumb servitor, the fair corpse with the letter in her hand, the picture of Launcelot and Guinevere standing in the oriel, the knights thronging round. Two particulars the poet has added to the picture, one of a somewhat commonplace character suggested by Byron, the other suggested perhaps by Virgil—the lily, and 'the silken case with braided blazonings'—the *exuviae dulces dum fata Deusque sinebant*. The lily was of course meant as a type of purity, but it was scarcely

needed. The remark in the letter that the dead writer had come to say a last farewell to the cruel lover who had never said farewell to her in life, is also a touch of the Laureate's. To the poet also belong the concluding lines—Launcelot's soliloquy, perhaps the finest passage in the whole poem, one of the finest Tennyson has ever written.

The poem has several reminiscences from the works of other poets and writers, particularly, as might be expected, from the fourth *Aeneid*.

In me there dwells  
No greatness, save it be some far-off touch  
Of greatness, to know well I am not great:

Cf. the well-known remark of Socrates in Plato's *Apology*, ch. ix :—

οὗτος σοφώτατός ἐστιν ὅστις ἔγνωκεν ὅτι οὐδενὸς ἄξιός ἐστι τῇ ἀληθείᾳ πρὸς σοφίαν

(That man is the wisest who knows that he is in reality of no worth at all with respect to wisdom).

The fine simile—

All together down upon him  
Bare, as a wild wave in the wide North-sea,  
Green-glimmering toward the summit, bears, with all  
Its stormy crests that smoke against the skies,  
Down on a bark—

is obviously borrowed from the *Iliad*, where it draws on three different similes.

οἱ δὲ ὥστε μέγα κῦμα θαλάσσης εὐρυπόροιο  
νηὸς ὑπὲρ τοίχων καταβήσεται, ὑππότ' ἐπείη  
τις ἀνέμου (Il. xv. 381-4)

(As when a great wave of the wide-wayed sea sweeps down over the bulwarks of a ship when the might of the wind is on it).

Cf., too, *Iliad*, xv. 624 *sqq.*

For the 'stormy crests' see *Iliad*, iv. 42-56. The 'green-glimmering toward the summit' is Tennyson's own fine touch.

Faith unfaithful kept him falsely true:

Cf. Andocides for a similar oxymoron:—

εἰσηγησαμένω μὲν Εὐφιλήτῳ πίστιν τῶν ἐν ἀνθρώποις ἀπιστοτάτην ἡναντιώθην (*De Myst.*, Bekker edit. *Orat. Att.* p. ix. 33).

The owls

Wailing had power upon her, and she mixt  
Her fancies with the sallow-rifted glooms  
Of evening, and the moanings of the wind:

This passage is an admirable illustration of Tennyson's power of *transfusing* the very essence of Virgil into English. Nothing could be more completely the counterpart of the verses in *Aeneid*, iv. 460, where Dido, with the shadow of her fate falling on her, seems to hear the phantom voice of Sichæus and 'mixes her fancies' with the glooms of night and the owl's lonely wail:—

Hinc exaudiri voces et verba vocantis  
Visa viri nox quum terras obscura teneret;  
Solaque culminibus ferali carmine bubo  
Sæpe queri, et longas in fletum ducere voces

(From it she thought she clearly heard a voice, even the accents of her husband calling her, when night was wrapping the earth with darkness; and on the roof the lonely owl in funereal strains kept oft complaining, drawing out into a wail its protracted notes).

It is interesting to compare the beautiful picture of the dead Elaine with Byron's equally beautiful picture of the dead Medora (*Corsair*, iii. 19). The points of resemblance make it difficult to think that

Tennyson has not borrowed from it, as a comparative extract will show. Compare—

In her right hand the lily

• • • • •  
All her bright hair streaming down  
• • • • • And she herself in white,  
All but her face, and that clear-featured face  
Was lovely, for she did not seem as dead,  
But fast asleep, and lay as tho' she smiled —

with

In life itself she was so still and fair  
That death with gentler aspect wither'd there.  
And the cold flowers her colder hand contain'd  
In that last grasp as tenderly were strain'd  
As if she scarcely felt, but feign'd, a sleep.

• • • • •  
Her lips . . . . seem'd as they forbore to smile,  
But the white shroud and each extended tress,  
Long, fair, &c.

The lines—

To doubt her fairness were to want an eye,  
To doubt her pureness were to want a heart—

sound like an echo from Shakespeare.

*The Holy Grail* is a series of adaptations, with more original touches than are usual with the Laureate, from those portions of Malory's Romance which deal with this sublime legend, namely book xiii. ch. vi. to the end of book xvii. Occasionally the prose story is followed very closely, as in the revelation of the Grail:—

And all at once, as there we sate, we heard  
A cracking and a riving of the roofs, &c.—

which should be compared with the seventh chapter of Malory's thirteenth book; as, again, in the adventure of Launcelot, which should be compared with

the fourteenth and fifteenth chapters of book seventeen. In this poem Tennyson's highest praise is, the skill with which he has grouped his details into a series of elaborate allegorical symbols, the ingenuity with which he has connected the story with the sin of Launcelot, with the failure of Arthur's life-purpose, with the dissolution of the Round Table. To him belong also beauties of diction, felicitous touches, felicitous symbolism. But to Malory, or rather to his predecessors, belongs the palm of invention, belong the pictur-esque and grandeur, the pathos, the weird and unearthly beauty of this divine legend.

The moral of the poem, which is summed up in the concluding words of Arthur, finds an admirable commentary in the concluding stanzas of the tenth canto of the first book of Spenser's *Faerie Queene*.

*Pelleas and Ettarre* is the versification of a story told in the twentieth, twenty-first, and twenty-second chapters of the fourth book of the *Morte d'Arthur*. The commencement and setting of the Idyll—the portion, that is to say, which describes young Pelleas and his meeting with Ettarre in the forest, as well as the portion which connects her sensual frivolity with the sin of Guinevere, and the treachery of Gawain with the treachery of Launcelot—are due to the poet. The concluding pages narrating the frenzy of Pelleas and his encounter with Launcelot are also additions. We have no space for extending quotations, but it may be interesting to compare the passage in which Malory relates the incident of the sword with the Laureate's poetical rendering :—

And when he had ridden nigh half a mile, he turned again and thought to slay them both, and when he saw them both

sleeping fast . . . . he said thus to himself: 'Though this knight be never so false, I will never slay him sleeping, for I will never destroy the fair order of knighthood.' And ere he had ridden half a mile, he returned again . . . . and pulled out his sword naked in his hand, and went to them there as they lay; and yet he thought it were a shame to slay them sleeping, and laid the naked sword overthwart both their throats, and so took his horse and rode away:

'I will go back and slay them where they lie.'  
 And so went back, and seeing them yet in sleep  
 Said, 'Ye that so dishallow the holy sleep,  
 Your sleep is death,' and drew the sword, and thought,  
 'What! slay a sleeping knight? The King hath bound  
 And sworn me to this brotherhood.' . . .  
 Then turn'd, and so return'd, and groaning laid  
 The naked sword athwart their naked throats,  
 Then left it, and them sleeping. . . .  
 And forth he pass'd.

This poem contains a simile, the history of which is perhaps worth tracing:—

As when

A stone is flung into some sleeping tarn  
 The circle widens till it lip the marge:

This simile appears first, I believe, in Silius Italicus, who gives us the following exquisitely finished cameo:

Sic, ubi perrupit stagnantem calculus undam,  
 Exiguos format per prima volumina gyros,  
 Mox, tremulum vibrans, motu gliscente, liquorem  
 Multiplicat crebros sinuati gurgitis orbes;  
 Donec postremo laxatis circulus oris  
 Contingat geminas patulo curvamine ripas

(*Punica*, xiii. 24 *sqq.*)

(So, when a pebble has broken up still water, small are the rings that it forms at first by its circling motions. And then as motion gathers it sends vibrations through the tremulous liquid and multiplies the thick coming circlets of

the curving flood, until at last, as the rims relax, the circle spreading widely reaches both banks).

See, too, for a less elaborate description Seneca (*Nat. Quæst.* i. 8).

Chaucer employs it in a description not less elaborate than that of Silius (*House of Fame*, ii. 283); and Shakespeare (*Henry VI.* Pt. I. act i. sc. 2). So, too, Phineas Fletcher (*Purple Island*, canto v. st. 47). Parnell rivals Silius in his highly finished picture (*Hermit*, 13–20), so also does Pope (*Temple of Fame*, 436–440). He employs it again in *Essay on Man*, Epist. iv. 364.

Till the *sweet heavens* have fill'd it

(so again *Mariana*—

She could not look on the *sweet heavens*) :

The epithet is Shakespeare's :—

Is there not rain enough in the *sweet heavens*  
To wash it white as snow? (Hamlet, iii. 3.)

*The Last Tournament* has nothing which exactly corresponds to it in the original Romance, and the chief incidents in the work appear to be the poet's invention. The catastrophe, the murder of Tristram, is founded on the following passage in the *Morte d'Arthur* :—

‘That is hard to do,’ said Sir Launcelot, ‘for by Sir Tristram I may have a warning. For when, by means of treaties, Sir Tristram brought again La Beale Isoud unto King Mark from Joyeus Gard, look what befell on the end, how shamefully that false traitor Mark slew him as he sat harping afore his lady La Beale Isoud: with a grounden glaive he thrust him in behind to the heart’ (*Morte d'Arthur*, xx. ch. 6).

In *Guinevere*, Tennyson draws to some very slight extent on the nineteenth and twentieth books of the *Morte d'Arthur*, but in no instance has he followed his original closely. *Guinevere*, like most of Tennyson's earlier poems, proves the diligence with which he sought materials for enriching his work. In his description of the genii and faerie spirits which in earlier and happier ages haunted Britain, as legends say, he has drawn on Crofton Croker's *Fairy Legends*. The story which suggested the amusing ghost incident in *Walking to the Mail*, supplies him here with one of his most pleasing pictures :—

Down in the cellars merry bloated things  
 Shoulder'd the spigot, straddling on the butts  
 While the wine ran.

This is taken almost literally from Crofton Croker :—

On advancing into the cellar, he perceived a little figure, about six inches in height, astride upon the pipe of the oldest port, and bearing a spigot upon his shoulder

(*Fairy Legends*, edit. 1862, p. 79).

It is possible too that the lines—

The flickering fairy-circle wheel'd and broke  
 Flying, and link'd again, and wheel'd and broke  
 Flying, for all the land was full of life—

may have been suggested by the concluding verses of Addison's charming mock heroic the *Pygmæogeranomachia* :—

Lætitiâ penitus vacat, indulgetque Choreis  
 Angustosque terit calles, viridesque per orbes  
 Turba levis salit.

In the lines—

And in thy bowers of Camelot or of Usk  
 Thy shadow still would glide from room to room,  
 And I should evermore be vext with thee  
 In hanging robe or vacant ornament,  
 Or ghostly footfall echoing on the stair—

we have an admirable expansion and interpretation of two pregnant lines in the *Agamemnon* of Æschylus:—

*πόθῳ δ' ὑπερποντίας  
 φάσμα δόξει δόμων ἀνάστειν* (*Agam.* 404-5)

(And, in his yearning for her who is over the sea, a phantom will seem to reign over his palace).

What are Tennyson's lines but the simple *unfolding* of what is latent here? The Shakespearian reminiscence (*King John*, act iii. sc. 4) is too obvious to be noticed.

*The Passing of Arthur* follows closely the original Romance, and is contained in the third, fourth, and fifth chapters of the twenty-first book. The opening is original, and in the commencement there are one or two alterations in the original story. Thus:—

And then the King Arthur drew with his host down by the seaside westward towards Salisbury.

Tennyson makes Lyonesse the scene of the battle. The Romance describes it as being fought 'on a Monday after Trinity Sunday,' Tennyson on the last day of the year. Most of the details of the battle, the mist, &c. are Tennyson's; his fine description being evolved for the most part out of the words—

And never was seen a dolefuller battle in no Christian land. For there was but rushing and riding, foining and striking, and many a grim word was there spoken either to other, and many a deadly stroke (chap. iv.).

It is not necessary to institute any minute com-

parison between the exact minor details given in the Romance and the poem, but it will suffice to illustrate the leading and important points.

‘Therefore,’ said Arthur, ‘take thou my good sword Excalibur, and go with it to yonder water-side. And when thou comest there I charge thee throw my sword on that water, and come again and tell me what thou there seest.’ ‘My Lord,’ said Bedivere, ‘your commandment shall be done, and lightly will I bring you word again.’ So Sir Bedivere departed, and by the way he beheld that noble sword, that the pommel and the haft were all of precious stones, and then he said to himself, ‘If I throw this rich sword in the water, thereof shall never come to good, but harm and loss.’ And then Sir Bedivere hid Excalibur under a tree.

In the poem the bare statement ‘So Sir Bedivere departed’ is expanded into a beautiful picture. He steps

athwart the place of tombs,  
Where lay the mighty bones of ancient men,  
Old knights, and over them the sea-wind sang  
Shrill, chill;

we see him passing by ‘zig-zag paths and juts of pointed rock,’ till he comes to ‘the shining levels of the lake.’ The line which simply tells how ‘the pommel and the haft were of precious stone’ reappears as

All the haft twinkled with diamond sparks,  
Myriads of topaz-lights, and jacinth work  
Of subtlest jewellery;

and the effect is still more heightened by their being seen in the light ‘of the winter moon, Brightening the skirts of a long cloud.’ The ‘under a tree’ becomes

the many-knotted waterflags  
That whistled stiff and dry about the marge.

In the

This way and that dividing the swift mind  
we have of course a literal version of Virgil's line—

Atque animum nunc huc celerem nunc dividit illuc  
(Æn. iv. 285).

A few lines further on, the sentence 'I saw nothing but the waters wap and the waves wan' is transmuted into two lines containing two of the finest onomatopœic effects in our language:—

I heard the ripple washing in the reeds  
And the wild water lapping on the crag.

Again:—

Then Sir Bedivere departed and went to the sword, and lightly took it up and went to the waterside, and then he bound the girdle about the hilts, and then he threw the sword as far into the water as he might, and then came an arm and a hand above the water, and met it and caught it, and so shook it thrice and brandished, and then vanished away the hand with the sword in the water.

In the poem we have the 'brand making lightnings in the splendour of the moon;' we have also the magnificent simile which compares its flashing flight to 'the streamers of the northern morn, Seen where the moving isles of winter shock By night;' the hand is 'cloth'd in white samite, mystic, wonderful.' We may notice, in passing, that Arthur's words to Bedivere—

Woe is me!  
Authority forgets a dying king—

may have been suggested by an anecdote of Queen Elizabeth. 'Cecil intimated that she must go to bed, if it were only to satisfy her people. "Must!"'

she exclaimed ; “ *is must* a word to be addressed to princes ? Little man, little man, thy father if he had been alive durst not have used that word, *but thou hast grown presumptuous because thou knowest that I shall die.*” (Lingard, vol. vi. p. 316.) But perhaps the Laureate was as unconscious that he was recalling Elizabeth as Elizabeth was doubtless ignorant that she was recalling Marlowe. The coincidence is worth pointing out :—

LEICESTER. Your Majesty must go to Killingworth.

K. EDWARD. *Must!* It is somewhat hard when kings *must go* (MARLOWE, *Edward II.*).

To continue :—

And when they were at the water-side, even fast by the bank hoved a little barge with many fair ladies in it, and among them all was a Queen, and all they had black hoods, and all they wept and shrieked when they saw King Arthur. ‘ Now put me into the barge,’ said the King; and so they did softly. And there received him three Queens with great mourning, and so they set him down, and in one of their laps King Arthur laid his head ; and then that Queen said, ‘ Ah ! dear brother, why have ye tarried so long from me ? ’

He would be a bold critic who should pronounce that Tennyson has improved this. He would be a still bolder critic who should wish to see a touch or letter of Tennyson’s version altered. The truth is that in this case there is no parallel between the poet and the romancist. Each had to tell a story in itself so wondrously beautiful, so touching, so suggestive, so picturesque, that it mattered little how it was narrated provided only that it were narrated with fidelity. Malory told it as Herodotus would have told it ; the Laureate tells it as Sophocles or Virgil might have

done. Tennyson's elaborate beauties command our admiration. Malory's simple words go straight to the heart. In the one case we dwell upon the eloquence of the speaker; in the other we are lost in the story he tells. We must, however reluctantly, acknowledge that in Tennyson's version much of the pathos of the Romance disappears. 'And called him by his name, complaining loud,' is, if one may venture to say so, a poor substitute for 'Ah! dear brother, why have ye tarried so long from me?' though it has the attraction of being an echo from Homer. On the noble lines—

The old order changeth, yielding place to new,  
And God fulfils himself in many ways,  
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world—

a passage in Greene's *James IV.* (act v. sc. 4) furnishes an interesting commentary:—

Should all things still remain in one estate,  
Should not in greatest arts some scars be found,  
Were all upright nor changed, what world were this?  
A chaos made of quiet, yet no world,  
Because the parts thereof did still accord:  
This matter craves a variance.

For the phrase—

Looking wistfully . . .

*As in a picture*—

see *Agamemnon*, 280:—

εβαλλ' ἔκαστον θυτήρων  
ἀπ' ὅμματος βέλει φιλοίκτω,  
πρέπουσα θ' ὡς ἐν γραφαῖς

(And each of her slayers she smote with the eye's pity-  
wooing dart, standing out conspicuous as in a picture).

The germ of the two fine lines—

For so the whole round world is every way  
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God—

is of course to be found in Homer (*Iliad*, viii. 25-6). Cf. too Plato, *Theætetus*, cliii. 10; but it may have been directly suggested either by a sentence in Bacon's *Advancement of Learning*, book i. *ad init.*—

According to the allegory of the poets . . . the highest link of nature's chain must needs be tied to the foot of Jupiter's chair— or by a sentence in Archdeacon Hare's Sermon on the *Law of Self-Sacrifice* :—

This is the golden chain of love whereby the whole creation is bound to the throne of the Creator.

Where falls not hail or rain, &c.:

Adapted from *Odyssey*, vi. 42-5 :—

ὅθι φασὶ θεῶν ἔδος ἀσφαλὲς αἰὲν  
ἔμμεναι οὐτ' ἀνέμοισι τινάσσεται οὐτε ποτ' ὅμβρῳ  
δεύεται οὐτε χιῶν ἐπιπλναται

(Where, they say, the seat of the Gods abideth sure, nor is it shaken by winds or ever wetted by shower, nor does snow come near it).

See illustration given in notes on *Lucretius*, p. 73.

In conclusion it may be noticed how closely the picture of Bedivere standing on the lonely crag 'straining his eyes beneath an arch of hand' that he might catch a last glimpse of his departed king, recalls the sublime scene in the *OEdipus at Colonus*, where Theseus stands in the same attitude on a similar spot—

ὅμμάτων ἐπισκιον  
χεῖρ' ἀντέχοντα κρατός (*OEd. Col.* 1650)

(With his hand before his head shading his eyes)—

gazing after a king who was also passing away in mystery to another state of being.

## CHAPTER X

## GROUP IX.—THE LOVER'S TALE, BALLADS, ETC.

*The Lover's Tale* is, as the poet has himself informed us, a very early work, so crude and unworthy of a place among his maturer productions, that nothing but the circulation of surreptitious copies by ill-advised friends would have induced him to reprint it. What is to be regretted is, that he has not only reprinted it, but pushed it into prominence by tagging it, as a singularly irrelevant introduction, to a poem not unworthy of his genius, the *Golden Supper*. But to the critical student the poem is of great interest. It is an example of Tennyson's work before his education as an artist had seriously commenced. There are few or no traces in it of the study of those masters to whose influence we owe it that the works most characteristic of the Laureate did not remain on the level of works most characteristic of Sydney Dobell and Alexander Smith. It is impossible to read a poem like *The Lover's Tale* without being struck with the extraordinary transformation which the genius of Tennyson underwent as soon as he began to turn his attention to the serious study of the great classics of Greece, Rome, Italy, and of his native country. What Ovid says of Callimachus, *Quamvis ingenio non valet*

*arte valet*, is, we feel, equally true of Tennyson. The florid exuberance of this poem is not that of promise, not that of Keats's *Endymion*, or that of Beaumont's *Salmacis and Hermaphroditus*; it is that of Smith's *Life Drama* and of Dobell's *Balder*.

The only distinct classical reminiscence in the poem is in the lines—

Phantom ! had the ghastliest  
That ever lusted for a body, sucking  
The foul steam of the grave to thicken by it—

which is plainly an allusion to Plato (*Phædo*, 69) : cf., too, Milton, *Comus*, 469–475.

*The Golden Supper* is a translation of one of the most beautiful of Boccaccio's tales, the tale which forms the Fourth Novel of the Tenth Day in the *Decamerone*. The names are altered, Julian being substituted for Gentile Carisendi, Lionel for Niccoluccio Caccianimico, and Camilla for Catalina. The additions are characteristic. While Boccaccio simply contents himself with saying that the lover descended into the sepulchre, the poet, true to the Teutonic instinct, takes occasion to give a ghastly description of the scene. In Boccaccio, the lover, after rescuing the lady from the tomb, returns to Modena and calmly resumes his duties as *podesta*, till the child is born. Tennyson makes him retire to a 'dismal hostel, in a dismal land,' where he lives in misery and is wasted with fever, and where he communicates his troubles to a sympathising friend. The essential difference between the poem and the novel is that in the one the story is saturated with sentiment, and in the other sentiment is almost entirely absent, as with Boccaccio it generally is.

*The Revenge* is a spirited version of a story which has been told more than once before, *e.g.* by Kingsley in *Westward Ho!* ch. xii., and by Mr. Froude in his *Short Studies*, vol. i. 493–501. But the earliest and best account is that given by Sir Walter Raleigh. It forms one of the volumes of Mr. Arber's reprints.

In *The Sisters*, a return to the *English Idylls*, the lines—

I stood upon the stairs of Paradise.  
The golden gates would open at a word—

are a variation of Wordsworth's

all Paradise  
Could by the simple opening of a door  
Let itself in upon him (*Vaudracour and Julia*).

The *aerial* poplar:

A Virgilian epithet applied, *Ecl.* i. 58, to the elm; *Æn.* iii. 680, to the oak.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I cannot but think that the real meaning of this word as applied by Virgil to the Alps (*Georg.* iii. 474) and to the mountains of Coreyra (*Æn.* iii. 291) has been missed by the commentators, who simply paraphrase as 'lofty.' What it really means is, blending with the air, fading imperceptibly into air, as objects at a distance seem to do. Cf. what Livy says of the Alps at a distance: 'ex propinquo visa montium altitudo, nivesque *cælo prope immixtae*' (*lib. xxi. ch. xxxii.*). Cf., too, Campbell, of a mountain—

'Whose sunbright summit *mingles with the sky*'  
(*Pleasures of Hope*, i.).

And I strongly suspect, in spite of the Scholiast's interpretation, that this is the real meaning of *ἡερίη* in Apollonius Rhodius, i. 580—

αὐτίκα δ' *ἡερίη πολυλήιος αἴλα πελασγῶν*  
δύετο

('anon the land of the Pelasgi, with its many cornfields, sank, blending itself with air, out of sight,' *i.e.* faded into air and sank below the horizon). So Virgil's—

'*Aerias Phœacum abscondimus arces*' (*Æn.* iii. 291);

The touching incident which forms the centre of the poem entitled *In the Children's Hospital*, namely, the incident of the little suffering child giving a sign to Jesus to show Him where His care was needed, was, according to a writer in *Notes and Queries* (N. and Q. Sixth series, vol. iii. p. 85), first told in *St. Cyprian's Banner*, a local magazine published by Hodges at 2 Park Street, Dorset Square, in December 1872. It there appeared as *Alice's Christmas Day*, and was said to be a true story related by a Sister of Mercy. 'Later on,' says the writer, whose note I am transcribing, 'I met with it in a pamphlet form, and have also seen it pp. 289-91 of the third volume of *New and Old*, a periodical magazine edited by the Rev. Charles Gutch.'

The passage in the dedicatory poem to the Princess Alice—

If what we call  
The spirit flash not all at once from out  
This shadow into Substance—*then perhaps*  
*The mellow'd murmur* of the people's praise

. . . . .

Ascends to thee. . . . . . . . . .  
where is he can swear  
*But that some broken gleam from our poor earth*  
May touch thee?

(Cf. *In Memoriam*, lxxxv. st. 22.)

Compare the passage in the *Ethics* where Aristotle is discussing the question whether, or in what way, the fortunes of the living may affect the dead (*Nich. Ethics*, I. xi.).

that is, 'we hide from view, we see the Phæacian hills fading into air and sinking out of sight.' See too *Catullus*, lxiv. 241, and *Ovid*, *Met.* ii. 226.

*Sir John Oldcastle*.—A soliloquy supposed to be spoken by Lord Cobham when in hiding in Wales, whither he escaped after the demonstration in St. Giles's Fields. For a commentary see passages and authorities cited in Wordsworth's *Eccles. Biog.* vol. i. pp. 217–277.

*Columbus*.—With regard to this poem a serious charge of plagiarism was brought against the poet by Mr. Eric Mackay,<sup>1</sup> who pointed out that it is little more than an adaptation of a poem entitled *Columbus at Seville* written by a Mr. Joseph Ellis, and published by Pickering in 1869, and in 1876. A comparison between Tennyson's poem and Mr. Ellis's certainly seems to prove beyond doubt that the Poet Laureate not only got the whole framework of his poem from Mr. Ellis's, but has appropriated many of Mr. Ellis's ideas and details. If the resemblances between the poems are coincidences, it would be difficult to match coincidences so extraordinary in the whole history of literary parallels. Of one thing there can be no doubt, that the first edition of Mr. Ellis's poem appeared eleven years, and the second four years, before Tennyson's.

*The Voyage of Maeldune*.—This poem is founded on an old Irish legend, preserved in the book of the Dun Cow, in the Yellow Book of Lecan, and in a MS. in the Harleian collection, MS. Harl. 5280. But it was first published in a translation by Dr. P. W. Joyce in his *Old Celtic Romances*. It was presumably on this version, published in 1879, that Tennyson

<sup>1</sup> *Vox Clamantis*: a comparison analytical and critical between the *Columbus at Seville* and the *Columbus* of the Poet Laureate, by Eric Mackay. (No date) Museum Press mark 11826. dd 38.

founded his poem. In his hands the story has been considerably modified—indeed, he has dealt with it in the same way as he has dealt with Malory's *Morte d'Arthur* in such idylls as *The Coming of Arthur*, deriving from his original little more than the framework of his poem. The chapters in Dr. Joyce's work which may be compared with the poem are, in order, i., ii., vii., xix., xi. and xxix., xxi. and xxii., xxxiii., xxxv. The words in stanza v.—

And *starr'd with a myriad blossom* the long convolvulus  
hung—

are plainly adapted from Shelley :—

The parasites  
· · · · · *Starr'd with ten thousand blossoms (Alastor).*

*De Profundis*.—The metaphysics of this poem find comment in the illustrations of the metaphysics of *The Ancient Sage*, see *infra*, p. 168 *seqq.*

O dear Spirit half-lost  
In thine own shadow, . . . . .  
· · · · · who wailest being born:

Cf. Plotinus, *Ennead*. V. lib. i. chap. i.:—

ἀρχὴ μὲν οὖν αὐταῖς τοῦ κακοῦ . . . ἡ γένεσις καὶ ἡ πρώτη ἐτερότης  
καὶ τὸ βουληθῆναι δὲ ἔαυτῶν εἶναι

(The beginning of evil to them (*i.e.* to souls) is birth, the separation from the former unity, and the desire of independence and isolation).

## CHAPTER XI

## GROUP X.—LATER MISCELLANEOUS POEMS

In the sonnet, *To the Rev. W. H. Brookfield*—

$\sigmaκιᾶς ὄναρ$ —dream of a shadow—go—

is from Pindar, *Pythian* viii. 135.

*Sir John Franklin*.—The lines on the cenotaph of Sir John Franklin form with the epigrams to the memory of Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, General Gordon, and Caxton, a group of poems which irresistibly suggest comparison with the parallel epigrams of Simonides. But how immeasurably inferior are the Poet Laureate's, not to the best, but to the poorest of his Greek predecessor's. Probably nothing so bad as that on Lord Stratford de Redcliffe was ever written seriously by a poet of Tennyson's eminence. It would indeed have been interesting to hear what Simonides and his brother poets would have had to say to an inscription on the statue of an eminent public man, the climax of which found expression in an antithesis of this kind :—

Here *silent* in our Minster of the *West*  
Who wert the *voice* of England in the *East*.

The best is, undoubtedly, the epitaph on Caxton :—

Till shadows vanish in the Light of Light.

There is an exquisite illustration of this in Lucy

Hutchinson's *Memoirs of her Husband*. I will quote the whole passage, glad to have the opportunity of doing so, as it is one of the most beautiful to be found in our own or in any other language:—

She was a very faithful mirror, reflecting truely though but dimmely his owne glories upon him, so long as he was present; but she, that was nothing before his inspection gave her a faire figure, when he was remooved was only filled with a darke mist, and never could againe take in any delightful object, or return any shining representation. The greatest excellencie she had was the power of apprehending, and the virtue of loving his. Soe, as his shadow, she waited on him everywhere, *till he was taken into that region of light, which admits of none*, and then-she vanished into nothing (*Memoirs of the Life of Colonel Hutchinson*, p. 45, quarto edition).

*Tiresias*.—The blind seer is presented to us at the moment he is encouraging Menœceus to sacrifice himself that Thebes may be saved. The poem might almost be regarded as a supplementary scene in the *Phœnissæ* of Euripides, either immediately preceding or immediately following the interview between Teiresias, Creon, and Menœceus, *Phœnissæ*, 833–1018. As in the play he is speaking while the storm of war is raging round the city, and its destruction is imminent. With the lines—

Thou hast eyes, and I can hear  
Too plainly what full tides of onset sap  
Our seven high gates, &c.—

cf. the whole of the chorus, 202–260, and also—for Æschylus too has been laid under contribution—*Septem contra Thebas*, 77–165, Tennyson's lines being an adaptation of the two. The passage where Teiresias relates the circumstances under which he was deprived of sight—

There once, but long ago, five-fold thy term  
Of years I lay; the winds were dead—

and the lines which follow are adapted from Callimachus (*Laracrum Palladis*, 70–130).

And heard not when I spake of famine, plague,

And angers of the God for evil done  
And expiation lack'd:

An allusion to Sophocles (*OEdip. Rex*, 315 *sqq.*, and *Antigone*, 988 *sqq.*).

Only in thy virtue lies  
The saving of our Thebes:

See the speech addressed to Creon in the *Phœnissæ*, 930–960.

Their names,  
Graven on memorial columns, are a song  
Heard in the future; few, but more than wall  
And rampart

recalls, but how feeble the echo, the noble fragment of Simonides, all that remains of his eulogy on those who fell at Artemisium (Frag. xxvi.). Cf., too, Leopardi's magnificent adaptation of it in his Canzone to Italy.

Thou, that hast never known the embrace of love,  
Offer thy maiden life:

Cf. *Phœnissæ*, 958–60.

The picture of Elysian life in the concluding verses is almost translated from a fragment of Pindar:—

And watch the chariot whirl  
. . . while the golden lyre  
Is ever sounding . . .  
. . . . and every way the vales

Wind, clouded with the grateful incense-fume  
Of those who mix all odour to the gods  
On one far height in one far-shining fire:

καὶ τοὶ μὲν ἵπποις γυμνασίοις τε, . . .  
τοὶ δὲ φορμίγγεσσι τέρπονται,  
παρὰ δέ σφισιν εὐανθής ἄπας τέθαλεν ὅλβος.  
οὐδμά δ' ἐρατὸν κατὰ χῶρον κίδναται  
αἰεί, θύα μιγνύντων πυρὶ τῆλεφανεῖ παντοῦα θεῶν ἐπὶ βωμοῖς

(PINDAR, Frag. x. 1)

(Some do delight themselves with horses and gymnastics, and others with the lyre, and with them all prosperity in full bloom hath ever flourished, and fragrance is spread over the pleasant place since they are ever mingling incense of all sorts in a far-shining flame on the altars of the gods).

*The Ancient Sage.*—In this poem are simply embodied, though with consummate skill in expression, the commonplaces of Eastern, Neoplatonic, and, I suppose, Chinese metaphysics. If it be necessary to identify Tennyson's sage, he may, in spite of the 'thousand summers ere the time of Christ,' be identified perhaps with Lau-tze, the old philosopher, the founder and head of the Tau-ist sect, who was contemporary with Confucius. The poet seems to have laid under contribution the *Tau Tēh King*, easily accessible in Chambers's version.<sup>1</sup> Three key quotations may be given:—

The *tau* [reason] which can be *taw-ed* is not the eternal *tau*. The name which can be named is not the eternal name (*Tau-Tēh King* i.);

<sup>1</sup> *The Speculations on Metaphysics, Polity, and Morality of the old Philosopher Lau-Tsze.* Translated from the Chinese by John Chambers.

The spirit, like the perennial spring of the valley, never dies. The spirit I call the abyss-mother; the passage of the abyss-mother I call the root of heaven and earth (*id. vi.*);

What you cannot see by looking at it is called plainness. What you cannot hear by listening to it is called rareness. What you cannot get by grasping at it is called minuteness. These things cannot be examined, and therefore they blend into unity. Boundless in its operation it cannot be named. Returning it goes home into nothing. This I call the appearance of non-appearance (*id. xiv.*).

In this we have the source of the suggestiveness of the passage—

The Abysm of all Abysms, beneath, within  
 The blue of sky and sea, the green of earth,  
 And in the million-millionth of a grain  
 Which, cleft and cleft again for evermore  
 And ever vanishing, never vanishes.

Cf. in *Locksley Hall Sixty Years After*—

Sent the shadow of Himself, the boundless, thro' the human soul,  
 Boundless inward in the atom, boundless outward in the whole.

Cf., too, the *Higher Pantheism*, and *Flower in the crannied Wall*.

But a better commentary than any of these would be the magnificent passage in which Plotinus describes being in essence, *Ennead. V. lib. viii. 4* :—

ὅρωσι τὰ πάντα οἵχ οἵς γένεσις πρόσεστιν ἀλλ' οἵς οὐσία, καὶ ἔαυτοὺς ἐν ἀλλοις· διαφανῆ γὰρ πάντα καὶ σκοτεινὸν οὐδὲ ἀντίτυπον οὐδέν. ἀλλὰ πᾶς παντὶ φανερὸς εἰς τὸ εἴσω καὶ πάντα φῶς γὰρ φωτί· καὶ γὰρ ἔχει πᾶς πάντα ἐν ἑαυτῷ, καὶ αὐτὸς ὁρᾶ ἐν ἀλλῷ πάντα ὅτι πανταχοῦ πάντα, καὶ πᾶν, πᾶν, καὶ ἔκαστον πᾶν, καὶ ἀπειρος ἡ αἰγλη· ἔκαστον γὰρ αὐτῶν μέγα, ἐπεὶ καὶ τὸ μικρὸν μέγα

(And they behold all things, not in which generation is, but essence, and themselves in others. For all is pellucid,

nor is anything dark or repellent, but every one to every one is perspicuous, and all to every one as light to light. For every one has all things and again sees all things in others. So that all things are everywhere and all is all, and each thing all, and infinite is the splendour. For everything there is great, since what is little is also great).

We, thin minds, who creep from thought to thought  
Break into 'Thens' and 'Whens' the Eternal Now:

Compare the magnificent lines in Cowley describing eternity:—

On no smooth sphere the restless seasons slide,  
No circling motion does swift time divide,  
Nothing is there to come, and nothing past,  
But an *Eternal Now does always last.*

(*Davideis*, book i.).

On me, when boy, there came what then I call'd  
• • • • • • • • • • • •

In my boy phrase 'The Passion of the Past.'  
• • • • • • • • • • •

A height, a broken grange, a grove, a flower  
Had murmurs 'Lost and gone and lost and gone !'  
A breath, a whisper—some divine farewell :

It is hardly necessary to refer to Wordsworth's *Ode on the Intimations of Immortality*. Cf., too, Henry Vaughan's *Retreat*, 'Silex Scintillans,' p. 34.

More than once when I  
Sat all alone, . . . . .  
The mortal limit of the Self was loosed  
And passed into the Nameless, as a cloud  
Melts into Heaven. I touch'd my limbs, the limbs  
Were strange, not mine—and yet no shade of doubt,  
But utter clearness, and thro' loss of Self  
The gain of such large life as match'd with ours  
Were Sun to spark :

Among the many who have described this sort of

ecstasy we may mention particularly Porphyry in his *Life of Plotinus*, chap. xxiii., one sentence of which may be quoted :—

οὗτος μάλιστα τούτῳ τῷ δαιμονίῳ φωτί, πολλάκις ἐνάγοντι ἔαυτὸν εἰς τὸν πρῶτον καὶ ἐπέκεινα θεὸν ταῖς ἐννοίαις, καὶ κατὰ τὰς ἐν τῷ συμποσίῳ ὑφηγημένας ὁδοὺς τῷ Πλάτωνι, ἐφάνη ἐκεῖνος ὁ θεὸς ὁ μήτε μορφὴν μήτε τινὰ ἴδεαν ἔχων, ὑπὲρ δὲ νοῦν καὶ πᾶν τὸ νοητὸν ἴδρυμένος . . . τέλος αὐτῷ καὶ σκοπὸς ἦν τὸ ἐνωθῆναι καὶ πελάσαι τῷ ἐπὶ πᾶσι θεῷ (PLOTINUS, edit. Creuzer, vol. i. lxxvii.).

Plotinus has himself described it, cf. *Ennead*. IV. lib. viii. cap. i. :—

πολλάκις ἐγειρόμενος εἰς ἔμαυτὸν ἐκ τοῦ σώματος, καὶ γιγνόμενος τῶν μὲν ἄλλων ἔξω, ἔμαυτον δὲ εἴσω θαυμαστὸν ἡλίκον ὄρῶν καλλος . . . καὶ τῷ θείῳ εἰς ταῦτὸν γεγενημένος, &c.

(I often, awaking out of the body into myself and being outside all things, but within myself, do behold a wondrous beauty, . . . having become one with the divine).

See, too, the whole of chapters ix., x., and xi. of *Ennead*. IX. lib. ix. See too the magnificent passage, *Ennead*. VI. lib. ix. ch. ix.

See Norris's (the Platonist) *Elevation* (Works, p. 53), Mrs. Browning's *Rhapsody of Life's Progress*, and Wordsworth's *Tintern Abbey* :—

That serene and blessed mood  
In which th' affections gently lead us on  
Until, the breath of this corporeal frame  
And e'en the motion of our human blood  
Almost suspended, we are laid asleep  
In body and become a living soul  
While . . . . .  
We see into the life of things;

and *Ode on the Intimations*, passage commencing—

Not for these I raise—

and the well-known anecdote which Wordsworth has told of himself—see Wordsworth's *Poems* (edit. Morley), p. 358. Cf., too, Sir Thomas Browne's *Hydriotaphia*, chap. v. :—

If any have been so happy as truly to understand Christian annihilation, ecstasies, exolution, liquefaction, transformation, gustation of God, and ingressio into the divine shadow, they have already had an handsome anticipation of Heaven.

It is, however, quite possible that the whole poem may have been suggested by the two speeches of Ahasuerus in Shelley's *Hellas*—in any case those speeches may be compared with the present poem :—

Disdain thee ? not the worm beneath my feet !  
 The Fathomless has care for meaner things  
 Than thou canst dream . . . . .  
 . . . . . Talk no more  
 Of thee and me, the future and the past :  
 But look on that which cannot change—the One,  
 The unborn and the undying. Earth and Ocean,  
 Space and the isles of life or light . . . . .  
 . . . . . This whole  
 Of suns and worlds and men and beasts and flowers,  
 With all the silent or tempestuous workings  
 By which they have been, are, or cease to be,  
 Is but a vision. . . . .  
 . . . . .  
 The future and the past are idle shadows  
 Of thought's eternal flight, they have no being ;  
 Naught is but that it feels itself to be  
 . . . . . All is contain'd in each.

In *Locksley Hall Sixty Years After*, it is needless to say that in the millennial aspiration, when the motto is to be

All for each, and each for all,

the poet has appropriated the famous Swiss watchword.

E'en the black Australian dying hopes he shall return, a white :

Compare Sir Thomas Browne, *Christian Morals*, section vi. :—

Some negroes who believe the Resurrection think that they shall rise white.

Browne, in his turn, got this curious fact from Mandelso. Speaking of the tribes 'living between the rivers Gambea and Sanaga,' he says of them, 'They believe the dead will rise again, but that they shall be white' (*Mandelso's Travels*, translated by John Davies, 1662, book iii. page 264).

In *Demeter and Persephone*, Tennyson has, like Browning in *Balaustion's Adventure*, reinterpreted an ancient legend, and this reinterpretation constitutes, of course, the life and soul of the poem. How far such reinterpretations are justifiable, especially when they involve ideas and sentiments of which the ancients could not have had the remotest conception, it is no part of this commentary to discuss. The legend on which Tennyson has worked has been elaborately told in the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter*, by Ovid in his *Fasti*, iv. 419-620, and again in his *Metamorphoses*, v. 384-571, and by Claudian in his *De raptu Proserpinæ*. Tennyson follows Ovid — the *Metamorphoses* version — most closely.

Led upward by the God of ghosts and dreams  
Who laid thee at Eleusis :

This is from the Homeric *Hymn*, 335 *sqq.* & 384.

When here thy hands let fall the gather'd flower :

Ovid prettily adds —

Hæc quoque virginem movit jactura dolorem (*Met.* v. 401)  
 (This loss also moved the virgin's woe).

A gleam as of the moon  
 When first she peers along the tremulous deep  
 Fled wavering o'er thy face :

Ovid compares this joy to the sun breaking from rainy clouds :—

Læta deæ frons est : ut sol, qui tectus aquosis  
 Nubibus ante fuit, victis ubi nubibus exit (*id.* 570-1)

(Glad is the face of the Goddess, as the sun, which before has been covered with watery clouds, when he comes forth from clouds now dispersed).

Tennyson has not thrown away Ovid's hint, but uses it a few lines on, not as a simile :—

And the sun  
 Burst from a swimming fleece of winter gray.  
 And all at once their arch'd necks *midnight-maned*  
 Jet upward :

Suggested by Ovid :—

Exhortatur equos : quorum per colla, jubaisque  
 Executit obscurâ tintetas ferrugine habenas (*id.* 403-4)

(He encourages his steeds, along whose necks and manes he shakes the reins dyed with the swarthy rust).

The lines describing her wanderings may be compared with Ovid's diffuse description (*Fasti*, iv. 462 *sqq.*).

And set the mother waking in amaze  
 To find her sick one whole :

An allusion to the restoration of the sick child of Celeus, Triptolemus, told in Ovid (*Fasti*, iv. 537-544). The incident of her meeting with the Fates appears to be Tennyson's invention.

I would not mingle with their feasts,  
Their nectar smack'd of hemlock :

So the Homeric *Hymn*, 49-50 :—

οὐδέ ποτ' ἀμβροσίης καὶ νέκταρος ἡδυπόστοιο  
πάσσατ' ἀκηχεμένη

(Nor in her woe did she taste ambrosia and the sweet nectar).

Rain-rotten died the wheat, the barley spears  
Were hollow-husk'd, the leaf fell, &c. :

Paraphrased from Ovid, *Met.* v. 480-486.

That thou shouldst dwell  
For nine whole months of each whole year with me,  
Three dark ones in the shadow with thy King :

Tennyson here follows the Homeric *Hymn*, not Ovid :—

ὑπὸ κεύθεστι γαῖς  
οἰκήσεις ὡρῶν τριτάτην μερίδ' εἰς ἐνιαυτόν,  
τάσδε δύω παρ' ἔμοί τε καὶ ἄλλοις ἀθανάτοισιν (*Hymn*, 397)

(Under the recesses of earth shalt thou dwell for the third part of the seasons in the year, and two parts with me and the other Immortals).

Ovid gives her six months above, and six months below (*Met.* v. 565-67).

The shadowy warriors glide  
Along the *silent field of asphodel* :

Cf. *Odyssey*, xi. 538-9 :—

ψυχὴ δὲ ποδώκεος Αἰλακίδαο  
φοίτα μακρὰ βιβᾶσα κατ' ἀσφοδελὸν λειμῶνα

(And the spirit of the fleet-footed son of Æacus passed with great strides along the field of asphodel).

The silence of the world below (broken often enough it is true) is what Virgil especially emphasises :—

Imperium est animarum, umbræque *silentes*  
 . . . . . loca nocte *tacentia late* (*Æn.* vi. 264-5);  
 Per *tacitum nemus* (386).

Among the miscellaneous poems there is one, *The Play*, which certainly appears to have been suggested by Quarles:—

Act first, this earth, a stage so gloom'd with woe  
 You all but sicken at the shifting scenes.  
 And yet be patient. Our Play-wright may show  
 In some fifth act what this wild Drama means.

Compare—

My soul, sit thou a patient looker-on,  
 Judge not the play before the play is done.  
 Its plot has many changes: ev'ry day  
 Speaks a new scene: the last act crowns the play  
 (QUARLES'S *Emblems*, book i. epig. 15).

And now I bring this my humble drudgery to a conclusion, and in doing so am anxious to repeat that the object with which I have undertaken it has simply been to illustrate the works of a classical English poet as the works of other classical poets, both in our own and in other languages, are illustrated, and to show how indissolubly linked is the poetry of England with the poetry of the Greek, the Latin, and the Italian classics. How far the immense extent of Lord Tennyson's indebtedness to his predecessors in various languages may be judged to detract from his claim to originality, is a question with which I have no concern. Many analogies and parallels no doubt resolve themselves into mere coincidences; many are examples of those poetic commonplaces which must necessarily abound wherever poetry finds voluminous expression; but the greater part of them as obviously

represent the material on which he has worked as the Homeric parodies in the *Aeneid* indicate their originals. It is here that I trust my illustrations may be of service to those for whom they are intended to be of service, that is to say, to serious students of a poet who is worth serious study. From all the higher work of the critic, from all attempts at the kind of criticism which is supposed to reflect any sort of credit on a critic, I have refrained. *Nobis in arcto et inglorius labor.* But I should not like it to be supposed that because I have instituted a comparison between Lord Tennyson and Virgil, I have assumed that they stand on the same level. The distance which separates the author of *In Memoriam* and the *Idylls of the King* from the author of the *Georgics* and the *Aeneid*, is almost as considerable as the distance which separates all other poets now living from the author of *In Memoriam*. It measures indeed the difference between a great classic whose power and charm will be felt in all ages, and in all regions coextensive with civilised humanity, and a poet who will be a classic intelligible to those only who speak his language and think his thoughts. In tone and temper Lord Tennyson is, to borrow an expression of M. Taine, the most 'insular' of eminent English poets, as he is assuredly the most conventional. And it is this which explains the extraordinary fascination which for nearly half a century he has exercised over his countrymen. A gift of felicitous and musical expression which it would be no exaggeration to describe as marvellous, an instinctive sympathy with what is best and most elevated in the sphere of the commonplace—of commonplace thought, of commonplace sentiment and activity—with corresponding

representative power, a most rare faculty of seizing and fixing in very perfect form what is commonly so inexpressible because so impalpable and evanescent in emotion and impression, and a power of catching and rendering the charm of Nature, of meadow, wood, and mountain, of sky and stream, of tree and flower, with a fidelity and vividness which resembles magic, and lastly, unrivalled skill in choosing, re-polishing, and resetting the gems which are our common inheritance from the past: in these gifts is to be found the secret of his eminence. And these gifts will suffice for immortality. But it is well that we should not accustom ourselves to talk and judge loosely. It requires very little critical discernment to foresee that among the English poets of the present century the first place will ultimately be assigned to Wordsworth, the second to Byron, and the third to Shelley. Had the Poet Laureate fulfilled the promise of the *Morte d'Arthur* he might have stood beside his master, and England might have had her *Æneid*. As it is, he will probably occupy the same relative position in English poetry as De Quincey occupies in English prose. Both are Classics—immortal Classics—but they are Classics in fragments.

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